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SCENES AND CHARACTERS

ILLUSTRATING

CHRISTIAN TRUTH.

No. IV.

GLEAMS OF TRUTH,

OR

SCENES FROM REAL LIFE.

By JOSEPH TUCKERMAN.

**BOSTON AND CAMBRIDGE:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.**

1835.

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TO

MRS. W—— R——, OF L——,

THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY HER FRIEND

J. T.

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they were her own,—because they were paid for with her own money.

“Hearing, about this time, of the dangerous illness of one of her old neighbors, an extremely poor woman, and whose condition was made ten-fold more wretched by the cruelties of an intemperate and reckless husband, she went with her husband to see this poor sufferer. She found her lying in a wretched bed, with twin children beside her, to whom a short time previously she had given birth. There, also, was the father of these children, then under the stupefying power of alcohol, and alike insensible to the claims of these helpless infants, and to the anguish of his own dying wife. It was a scene, the horrors of which I cannot describe. They are hardly to be conceived. There was scarcely any furniture in the room, except a poor and long-worn table, and the bed in which the mother and her infants were lying. The family could have descended but one step lower, and yet have retained a shelter. Miserable as the bed was, — and it was one of the most miserable to be found even among the poorest, — it yet raised her who was upon it from the floor. She suffered less upon it than she would have suffered in lying upon the hard floor, with only a few shavings, or a little straw beneath her. Over that bed, (it was about four years ago) stood the woman who has just left us, gazing alternately upon that mother and her twin children. I know not from which of these suppliants came the tones which most deeply pierced her heart. The cries of the infants, which in

other circumstances might have been heard with pleasure, as indications of the strength of the main spring of life within them, even while yet they were otherwise so feeble, now seemed in them the most impassioned appeals which could be addressed to the human soul. It hardly required an effort of the imagination to associate with these cries the very words, 'Mercy! Mercy!' And the deep drawn sigh of the mother,—a sigh which seemed to tear up all the sensibilities of the soul that heard it, and thus to show the depths from which it had come in the soul of the sufferer,—and the big tears, as again and again they rolled over her cheek,—as they gushed from closed eyes, and rolled over cheeks already as pale as they would be in death,—these were appeals, from which this good woman could not turn away.

" 'What can I do for you,' she asked the sufferer.

" 'O nothing,' was the reply; 'I shall soon be gone, and I have now but one care. Were it not for my babes, I should be glad to go. But, O, what will become of my children? In the wide world there is no friend for them, unless ——' here she hesitated,—sobbed,—but at last said, 'unless you will take them.'

" 'And will you give them to me?' said this woman.

" 'O most joyfully,' replied the agonized mother; and, pressing her hand upon her throbbing heart, added, 'Most gratefully! You have no child. Will you take them? Will you be their mother?'

"This woman,—may I not say this *admirable* woman?—went to her husband, who was standing in a distant part of the room, and said to him, 'May I take these children? I shall be very glad to have them for my own.'

" 'I am quite willing,' was his reply.

"Then, turning to the father of the children, she asked him, 'Will you also give me the children *entirely for my own?*'

" 'Yes; I cannot take care of them,' was his reply.

"Then immediately bending over the mother, she said, 'Make yourself now quite easy; be at peace; I will bring up these children as my own.'

"Here was a scene of moral sublimity, which I must leave to your own imaginations. A painter would have dated from it as an era in his life. Bring before your mind, in the first place, the bloated, insensible, reckless husband of that dying wife, and father of those twin children; then the husband of the woman you have just seen, his face lighted up with the interest which had been excited in his heart for these children, and alternately looking upon them, upon their father, upon his own wife, and upon the dying mother. Then conceive of this wife, thus suddenly become the mother of two adopted infants, bending over the bed of the mother who had given birth to them; her own eyes now filled with tears, at once of sympathy with the sufferer before her, and of gratitude in the feeling of the relief which she had given to this sufferer, and of the boon

she had obtained in these children. And, finally, see that dying mother, who, a moment before, had lain with closed eyes, and apparently breathing out her life under the pressure of a weight which seemed to be crushing to death her very soul, as well as her body; her eyes, now open, and glistening with the grateful emotions of her heart; her very tears, irradiated as they were with a smile, now indicating the relief of her mind, and its comparative lightness; and hear her, now thanking God as for the greatest of earthly blessings, and now, as she turned her eyes from her children, to their new mother, looking the emotions to which words could give no utterance. The sufferer soon expired, and the infants were immediately taken to their new home. And there now are those children, a boy and a girl. They are between three and four years old; and, through these years, they have been objects of a care, a watchfulness, a love, which could hardly be exceeded by any parent. These are the only children of this woman. Will you now go with me, and see the little one that is ill? Go with me; and while you shall be there, ask no questions implying your knowledge of what I have told you. Observe for yourselves the workings of her heart. Will you meet me in about twenty-five minutes from this time, at or near No. 15, — Street?"

One of the gentlemen at once agreed to meet me, and we separated. The appointed moment brought us together again. I entered the house, and he followed me. We passed through the

small shop, ascended a flight of stairs, and entered a chamber. It was a small room, partitioned off from a large one, the front windows of which opened into a thronged and noisy street. But it was a neat and commodious room. The little sick boy was lying in a clean bed; the father was at the bed-side, with his little girl upon his knee; a nurse was busy at the fire; and the mother, — yes, I will call her so, for she has well earned this dearest of human names, — after a respectful notice of my friend, began her account to me of the rise and progress of the illness of her boy. He was not dangerously ill. But the apprehensions of the mother had been strongly excited. This child, — or rather, these children, — she considered as her most precious earthly possession. They had been a peculiar gift of God to her; and while she committed them to Him from whom she had received them, it was with all the sensibilities, with which a mother's heart clings to her babes. She wanted the sympathy, the support of Christian friendship; and it was to obtain these, that she had asked me to visit her child. The mother of the Gracchi felt not a higher sentiment towards her children.

“I think you will not,” I said, “be called to the trial of separation from your little boy. We should, however, be constantly prepared for the trials, to which a little reflection would make us feel that we are constantly exposed. And we should feel that our Father is as kind in his purposes when he afflicts us, as when he crowns us with prosperity.”

"I know it," she said; "I know we should be always resigned to his will; and I hope—" Her heart was too full for utterance.

My friend approached the little girl, and said, "I think brother will soon be well again; and then you will be very happy."

"Don't cry, mother," said the little girl; "brother will soon be well again."

The mother told us of the fond anticipations with which she had looked to the near approach of the time, when both of her children would go to school. She told us of their love of each other, and of their affectionate expressions and conduct to herself; and of her hopes of their future virtue, and usefulness, and happiness. I endeavored to strengthen in her heart the principles of a true and unreserved dedication of herself, of her children, and of every interest of her soul to God, and to cheer her with the trust, which I thought she might feel, that she would be blessed with the recovery of her child; and having then united with her in prayer, we left her.

"And those are the twin children of whom you told me?" said my friend.

"They are," I replied; "and I will now ask if the woman who took them from the sink of pollution in which she found them, who for four years has been to them all that a mother could have been and who is hoping and striving to rear them with all a mother's tenderness and fidelity, both for time and for eternity, is not an admirable woman, — a public benefactor?"

“I certainly think,” said he, “that this is higher virtue, greater self-sacrifice, purer benevolence, than was that of which I expressed to you such high admiration. This is a noble charity. I would rather be that woman, than the founder of any hospital in Christendom. I fear there are not many even of those who give most liberally of their abundance, who would have taken two children such as these were to his own home, and his own bosom, and have been to them as a father.”

“I would be just,” said I, “in my estimate of every individual. There is great virtue,—or, to speak with reference only to benevolence, there are noble examples of it, among the rich. But there are also noble examples of it among those who are not rich, and even among the poor. I feel a profound respect for the affections and the character of the woman we have just left. She is, indeed, entirely above dependence on charity. But she has raised herself to the competency in which you have seen her, by her own industry and economy. She has known what it is to struggle with the difficulties of a far lower condition, and she knows not only the physical sufferings, but the moral exposures, of childhood in such a condition. She has therefore the joyous feeling of having saved two children from the greatest of those exposures. I go to that woman that I may learn, and not that I may teach, the benevolence of the Gospel.”

“This, however,” said my friend, “is, I suppose, altogether an unparalleled example. It is

beautiful as an illustration of what might be effected by Christian benevolence; and, even standing alone, I gaze upon it with delight, as a bright light in a very dark place."

"I could not indeed," said I, "tell you of many such examples. Yet one occurs to me which is not altogether dissimilar. About four years ago my assistance was asked by a poor woman, a Mrs. Sandon, who was very solicitous to obtain a situation in which her eldest son might learn a trade. The boy was then fourteen years old. In my intercourse with this family, I was particularly gratified by the strong interest which the members of it felt in each other. Four other children seemed to feel quite as anxious as their mother respecting the provision which was to be made for John. A short while afterwards, when I was speaking of this family to one who had long and intimately known it, I was told that a poor girl, whose heart had been stolen and broken by one of the basely unprincipled prowlers upon female credulity and vanity, in the day of her desolation and misery had sought a temporary shelter in the house of Mrs. Sandon. There, for a time, her board was paid by him who had ruined her. This young creature gave birth to a son, — and died. The father continued to pay the board of this child for some months, and he also died. Application was then made for aid to the relations of this father. But this aid was peremptorily refused. Mrs. Sandon then gave this boy the place of a son in her heart. She taught him to call her, mother, and reared him with her chil-

dren as her own child. He was educated in our schools, is now at a good trade, and gives a fair promise of being a respectable and useful man. Now I am as much alive as you can be to the danger of increasing profligacy, by provisions called charities 'pour enfans trouvés.' But I greatly honor the virtue which saved that child from growing up ignorant of the relations, interests, and virtues which are developed in the heart, and can grow freely and strengthen only within the sphere of the domestic circle, and under the parental influence of home."

We entered another dwelling, and ascended to its upper story. The sun shone brightly into the chamber, and the room was entirely clean and in order. A beautiful child, between two and three years old, was apparently as happy as she could be in the fulness and overflow of her own spirits; and an infant of about a year old was sleeping in a cradle. A very pale and obviously feeble man was sitting near the cradle. Having introduced my friend, I inquired of Mr. Burt, the father of these children, concerning his wife. "She has gone out to work for the day, sir," he replied.

"You are not well, sir," said my friend. "Have you been long ill?"

"I have been confined eleven months, sir," said Mr. Burt. "I have a disease of the heart which makes me incapable of any greater exertion than is required for moving about the room. I could not go up and down stairs without great suffering."

"I am glad to see you in so pleasant a cham-

ber," said my friend. "Your room is light, and you may see far around you. I should think also that this is a warm room."

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Burt. "Our stove keeps it very comfortably warm. And then, too, we live in great quietness here. But it is very fatiguing to bring water so high; and to carry clothes into the yard, and to bring them up here. I should much prefer a lower room; but then the rent would be higher."

"And what is your rent?"

"Five and three pence per week. A room as good as this, below, would be six and nine pence, or seven and six pence."

"Does your wife earn enough to support you all?" asked my friend.

"Not enough for our whole support in winter. She generally earns enough to pay our rent, and to supply us with food. But she sometimes goes beyond her strength, and sometimes she is not well enough to work at all. But we do not require much aid except for fuel."

"And what has been your occupation?" asked my friend.

"For the last two years I was a laborer," said Mr. Burt; "but I was not strong enough for hard work."

"You were not then brought up to labor?"

"In early life, I lived upon a farm. My parents were farmers. I was with them till near the time when I was of age. I then came to the city, and got a place as runner in an office, and had very good wages. After some years, when

I had laid up between five and six hundred dollars, I thought I could go into trade. I therefore opened a grocery shop; and my money gave me credit enough to enable me to open a well stocked shop. There for awhile I supposed I was doing very well. But my creditors failed; and *their* creditors came upon me, and attached my goods. Here I lost nearly all I had possessed, and I had then no resort but to my hands.

"And your wife has supported you for the last eleven months?"

"She has, sir, with the assistance we have received from a few friends."

"You are greatly blessed," said my friend, "in having a wife as able and well disposed as she is. I hope your spirits do not fail you under your losses."

"No, sir," said Mr. Burt; "we are very happy. My wife works too hard; but she is very cheerful; she never complains."

"Taking into view your disease and confinement," I said, "neither of which would be less if you had even a large fortune, what is there, for the want of which you have greatly suffered, and which such a fortune would have given you?"

"Why, sir," said Mr. Burt, "I do not know that there is much. I might have delicacies which I have not. But I cannot eat or drink much; and the little I can take is of the simplest kind. I suppose we have not wanted any thing which was absolutely necessary for either of us. I am more troubled that my wife has so much to do,

than I am for the want of any thing which we have not."

"And yet," said I, "it is not improbable that these very exertions of your wife have strengthened your interest in each other, and your mutual affection, as no prosperity would have strengthened them."

"It may be so," he said; "and yet property is a great good to those who know how to use it wisely."

"Ay," I replied; "and in the hands of the wise it becomes a great good to many beyond themselves. But you have a good, I trust, which is better than all the fortunes of the world; and for that good you may be greatly indebted to your long illness. I have strong doubt whether the trial of poverty be greater than that of abundance, or whether sickness be by any means so great a trial of virtue as health. To know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, is eternal life. Do you not think, then, that your adversity and illness have been important means of bringing you to the knowledge of God and of the Savior? Would you exchange this knowledge, with its consolations and hopes, for all that the world could give you?"

"By no means," said he. "I am poor; but when I lost my property, I did not lose my conscience; and I hope I never shall."

"I hope you will not," I said. "You may be able to work again for your family, or you may not. But, even should you not, you may daily be working out for yourself an infinitely more

glorious inheritance than any of the earth. Let it be our care to bring every thought, desire, and feeling into obedience to our Father's will. You have your cross to bear, and I have mine. Let us each take up his cross, whatever it be, and bear it after Jesus. The trial which purifies, be it what it may, will exalt us. And the trial which perverts and corrupts us, be it what it may, will be for our increasing degradation and misery."

In passing down stairs from this visit, I found a very aged woman standing at the door of her room, obviously waiting to see me. I paused, and she said, "I hope you will aid those good people. They sometimes really suffer. I want nothing for myself; but that woman is slaving herself to death. She is now out washing, and will be out all day; and after she has come home at night, she will do her own washing, and at sunrise will have all her clothes hanging in the yard. But they will never complain."

"I will soon see them again," I replied; and we left her.

"That is a very interesting family," said my friend. "I should be glad to know more of them. Might I visit them without you?"

"Certainly," I answered; "and most glad shall I be if you will once a week call upon them. You see that there is no difficulty in coming into very familiar communication with them. They want this kindly recognition and intercourse, and will be very grateful for it. What would the visits of a truly sympathizing friend be to you, if you had been eleven months shut up in your chamber,

and week had followed week, and month had followed month, to find and leave you in solitude and poverty?"

A short distance brought us before the door of a family I had intended to visit. We entered. A mother was sitting by a stove, with a very young infant in her arms. Two other children, about five and three years old, were in the room. An elderly woman was also sitting with the mother. I saw that the mother had been weeping.

"Ah!" said I, "your husband has again gone astray."

"He has, sir," she replied; "and now it appears as if things were worse than they have ever been with us. He has taken things from his employer, and has pawned them for drink."

Tears chased one another rapidly down her cheeks. I had intimately known this family between five and six years. Turning therefore to my friend, I said, "The husband of this mother is a journeyman. He has a good trade, and is able to earn seven dollars and a half a week. On my first acquaintance with him, I found that he was periodically,—about once in five weeks,—brought to the deepest degradation and misery by intemperance. After having been in this condition six or eight days, he would awaken as from sleep. He had been alternately stupefied and maddened. Now his strength would be prostrated, but his moral sensibilities would be in strong action. He would be covered with shame; would weep, and most solemnly declare that he

would never again taste spirits. I believe that, as far as intention was concerned, he was entirely honest in this declaration. In a day or two he would be sufficiently restored to return to his work; and for successive weeks he would show great susceptibleness to the enormity of the evil into which he had fallen, and to the interests and happiness of the family which he had so wantonly made miserable. He would be very industrious, a faithful husband, and a kind father. In this condition of mind I have repeatedly left him, when, having used water only as a drink for five or six weeks, he seemed to be in perfect health and self-possession, and entirely resolved to persevere in the good course in which he had been living. But within an hour or two he would seize a moment in which he was unobserved, lay by his implements of work, and steal out. He has been accustomed to work in this room. As soon as his wife missed him, under such circumstances, she was quite certain all was over with him. If he had not money in his pocket, he would leave his hat or his coat in pawn for a glass of rum. Then he would come home at night, and throw himself upon the floor to sleep. At dawn the next morning, he would be out again; and if he still had not money, he would take some small, but comparatively valuable article of furniture; or, if he could obtain it, any article of his Sunday suit, to leave in pawn for the drink for which he hankered. I have visited him for successive days when he has been in this condition. But not more than once or twice have I been

able to call up any sensibility in him, till the ninth or tenth day after his fall. Now these parents have six children, the two eldest of whom are earning five dollars a week. But here is an evil which threatens them all with ruin."

"Is not this a case of monomania?" asked my friend.

"I have long been satisfied that it is," I replied; "and many are the cases among the intemperate, which I have long thought should be considered and treated as cases of monomania. I believe, too, that a cure of this disease might be obtained in an asylum for the unhappy beings who are the subjects of it. Not unfrequently have I met with cases, in which I have been assured by men, and I believe them when they say to me, that the taste of ardent spirits is not grateful to them; that they do not drink them for the pleasure of drinking them, nor yet that they may obtain oblivion of suffering. 'What then,' I ask, 'is the impelling principle which drives you to an act, which you know must be followed by such fearful consequences?' 'I don't know,' is the reply; 'it is an unaccountable hankering.' 'But you know that every glass of rum is extending disease more widely though your whole body; and by the same means you are extending an influence inconceivably more dreadful through all your dispositions, your affections, your soul. You are depraving and breaking down the best capacities of your immortal nature. You are not only throwing away reputation and personal happiness, but you are bringing the deepest misery to this wife,

and to these children. And for what? For a glass of rum, or of gin. And yet you say that it is not the pleasant taste of the rum or gin which allures you to it. Is this possible?' 'It is possible,' he replies, 'and it is true.' 'And since you have been accustomed to drink it, have you never abstained from the use of it for a week or a fortnight?' 'Yes, often.' 'And then what led you to return to it?' 'I don't know; I did not think of consequences; I could not help it.' 'If I were now to offer you a glass of rum, could you not refuse it?' 'O yes; I do not want it.' 'But now, when you do not feel that hankering of which you have spoken, and when you can calmly reflect upon the consequences of yielding to it by drinking spirits, can you not arm your mind by religious principles, and by considerations of your family, and prepare for the hour of danger when it shall come upon you? How happy may you make your wife and children! What ruin may you not bring upon them by yielding to this hankering! And what a light and strength of joy would come to your own mind, if, feeling your immortality, and your accountableness to God, you should triumph over this depraved and depraving appetite!' 'I know it.' 'And will you then so transgress again?' He is silent; and to-morrow, or perhaps within the passing day, he may make himself, and all connected with him, completely miserable. He will die the victim of the diseased appetite, which might have been cured in an asylum, and the cure of which might have restored him to virtue, and usefulness, and happiness."

"Is it possible that I might save my husband from the house of correction?" inquired the agonized mother. "I am told that an officer is seeking for him."

I replied, "I should be glad indeed to have him for a time under other restraints than those of a prison. He requires restraint. But he requires also more than restraint, and hard labor, and solitary confinement at night. He requires a mental and moral treatment, which can be extended to him only by those who shall well understand cases of this kind. But our House of Correction is not now the den of iniquity which it once was. It will be better for him even to be there for a few months, than to have the tendencies of his disposition unchecked, as they have been, under the unnatural and strange excitements of his appetite for ardent spirits. At least, should he be sent there, let us hope for good, and do what we may for the attainment of the good we desire for him."

I have no wish to repeat all that I said on this, or on any other occasion. I would suggest a few simple facts as materials for thought. I would give a mere outline of a few scenes as they actually passed before me. I may, however, be permitted to say, that I not only sympathize deeply with this suffering mother, but I equally pity, and cannot despise or contemn, her husband. I am not insensible to the evil, to the great guilt, of intemperance. But to a great extent I hold society, — or its more favored classes, — to be far more guilty in respect to the intemperance of the poor, than are the poor

themselves. The case of which I have spoken is, I think, decidedly one of monomania. Let any one who doubts of such cases, inquire of the superintendent of any asylum for the insane. The cases, however, are far more numerous, in which the poor become intemperate, in the first place, from the moral neglect with which they are treated; and, secondly, from the facilities and excitements to intemperance by which they are every where surrounded. Add to these, a consideration of their dark, narrow, and often unhealthy places of abode; of homes intensely warm in summer, and which can hardly be made warm enough for comfort in winter; of the discouragement felt during weeks and months, when all that has been earned has been expended, and no resource remains but beggary, or debt, or theft; of a wife and children demanding what the husband and father cannot supply; and of this husband and father almost literally driven from his home for the relief, which, from day to day, he feels that he cannot find there;—and I do not say that you will justify the poor in their intemperance;—O, no ! but you will feel that the poor are not alone responsible for the debasement to which intemperance so often brings them. You will feel strong compassion for them in this debasement. You will feel that the greatness of their moral exposures, viewed in connection with their intellectual and moral weakness, gives them claims to an interest, a sympathy, a moral aid, which has never yet but very partially been extended to them.

Look for a moment also to the thousands, and tens of thousands, who from month to month are born in the haunts of poverty. In our own city, all the advantages of our common schools are freely offered to each of the children of this class among us. Yet, even here, not a few of these children often drink ardent spirits in their very infancy. Many of them are the children of parents, who have no strong sensibility to the importance of keeping their children at school; of parents, who have themselves never learned to read well enough to enjoy a book. Many also are kept from school between the ages of eight and thirteen or fourteen years, to gather fuel for their parents through the winter; and having thus been kept from school through one half of the year, are not themselves disposed to go, nor do their parents care to send them, through the other half of it. They are thus reared to idleness and recklessness. At the age of fourteen or fifteen, when they should be apprenticed, many of them will engage in no employment which will impose a restraint upon their liberty; and of those who will then submit to restraint, many will be placed in the charge of those, who will never for a moment regard them as intellectual and moral beings; who will do nothing to form them to a religious and moral character; and who will not only leave them exposed to intemperance, but by their own daily example in drinking spirits, will excite them to it. I cannot pass through the streets in which these classes of children are to be seen,—I cannot follow them

to their houses, or bring fairly before my mind the difficulties and dangers of their condition, and the inquiry, *Where lies responsibility for them?* and not feel, that very much of it lies with myself, and with the portion of society around me whose interest in them, and respect for them, would secure their salvation.

And in looking to the parents of these children, it should be distinctly understood, that the laborer cannot always find employment, even if he always had both health, and a disposition for it. Demand must sometimes fail for labor, as it does also for the products of labor. Is it said, that the laborer should economize his resources while he has employment, that he may be enabled to meet the necessities of the time when he cannot have it? True, he should. And, I will add, he should be trained to that self-discipline, by which he will not only be enabled to maintain a strict economy of his resources in the time of his prosperity, but may also maintain the moral energy and balance of his mind, when, with all this economy, he cannot pay his rent, or give necessary clothing or bread to his wife and children. Ah! this is a trial not uncommon among the poor; and for which great moral energy, and great strength of religious principle, are demanded. And how is this religious principle,—how is this energy, to be obtained? Does God give it arbitrarily to one, and withhold it from another? Or, on the contrary, is it not the very purpose of the diversity of talents and of condition which He has ap-

pointed for men, that the wise should be the teachers of the ignorant, that the strong should be the supporters of the feeble, that both inward and outward blessings should be held to be responsibilities, and that man should be his instrument for the communication of his greatest blessings to man? I thank God that society is awakening to sensibility to these great principles; and when these principles shall live and act in the soul, as He intends that they shall live and act there, the rich will find that they have never conferred a greater good upon the poor, than the poor, in return, will have been instruments of conferring upon themselves.

CHAPTER II.

A MORNING WALK, CONTINUED.

A SHORT walk brought us to a house, in which were three families that I have been accustomed to visit. We entered a chamber. Here was a mother, Mrs. L——, with a babe in her arms. A little boy, nine years old, was lying dangerously ill in the bed. The eyes, the whole countenance of Mrs. L——, told us how bitterly she had been weeping. To my inquiry, "How is Charles to-day?" she replied, "Very low, sir. The doctor has given him quite over." A poor

woman, who lives in the immediate neighborhood, and who was then in the room, was about to leave it, saying, "I will be back in a very short time." "Well," said Mrs. L——, looking at a kettle of water which was over the fire, "the water will boil very soon."

I perceived the object of this remark, and of the proposed return of the poor woman; and I said to her, "I am glad of this; you are coming back to do some washing for Mrs. L——."

"Yes, sir," was her reply; "I am sure *she* cannot do it, and I have great pleasure in doing what I can for her."

"You have *pleasure* in it," said I. "I know that you have; but now do you understand why it is, that you have this feeling of pleasure in doing this kind office?"

She paused; but soon answered, "Why, sir, it is our *duty* to do what we can for one another."

"Exactly so," I replied; "God has bound up our highest and purest pleasures with our sense of duty. Your will is now in harmony with the Heavenly Father's will. You are obeying a law at once of his Providence, and of his word. Your neighbor is in affliction: because you know that she is in affliction, you come to see what you can do for her. The clothes of her family must be washed, and she can neither wash them herself, nor afford to pay another for washing them. In a knowledge of her necessities, you feel that *you* have a duty devolving upon yourself. Your heart thus hears the voice of Providence saying to you, 'Give her the assistance

you are able to give her.' To a Christian's heart this voice will be as distinct as if it actually came to the ear in so many words. And your heart has answered, 'I will do what I can.' This is what I mean, when I say that your heart is in harmony with the Heavenly Father's will."

This poor woman's face was suffused. A tear rolled down her cheek; and, simply repeating, "I will be back directly," she left us. The tears of Mrs. L—— were again flowing profusely. I went to the bed, and thought I saw the impress of death upon the face of the child. I turned to her, and said, "And cannot you also, my friend, now bring your mind into harmony with our Heavenly Father's will?"

"O, sir," she replied, "he is the best of all my children. He is the best little boy I ever knew. I never had any trouble with him. He would never even go into the street, but when I gave him leave to go. And his Sunday-school teacher says he is the best boy in his class. He was here yesterday, and as he stood looking at him he said, 'I hope I shall see him in the school again.' I have loved him too much. He has been my idol."

Leaving her mind free for a moment to regain its balance after this gush of maternal sensibility, I said to her, "And yet you would not be an idolater. You would not turn from our Heavenly Father to an idol. You would not withhold your heart, you would not withhold even this precious child, from him."

"I am very wicked," was the reply. "I know

that I ought to be wholly resigned to God's will. I know that there is no other than himself in whom I can find peace. I hope I shall be enabled to say, 'Not my will, but thine be done.' "

"This very hope, my friend," said I, "is the beginning of Christian resignation. But you have not yet the hope which is fastened as an anchor sure and steadfast within the veil. You do not yet feel all that Jesus meant, when he said of little children, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.' And yet every thing you have said of your little boy ought to fill you with consolation in the thought that he may die. Suppose him to be more advanced in years, and that he had been both to you, and to God, a disobedient and wicked child. Suppose that he were about to die, and that you could remember little of him except his sins. Ah! that would be trouble indeed. Yet even then, where could you find a refuge for your soul, except in our Heavenly Father? "

"What an aggravation of sickness must it be among the poor," said my friend when we had left this chamber, "that washing, and all the work of a family, with all the noise of children, must be going on, while a child, or a father, or a mother may require nothing so much for comfort or recovery, as darkness and stillness? How little do we realize, in the cleanliness and order and quiet of our sick chambers, the greatness of these blessings so common among us! I am very glad to have witnessed this scene; I hope I shall be made better by it."

We passed into the opposite chamber. Here

were a mother and three young children. One of these children had recently been dangerously ill; and the condition in which the little son of Mrs. L — was then lying, apparently very near to death, made this mother even more alive than she would otherwise have been, to the blessing of the restoration of her own child. This circumstance, of course, gave the direction to our conversation.

"I hope," said Mrs. B —, "that I am beginning to know what religion is. I have lived for the world quite long enough. Before I was married, I thought of little besides dress and company. And since I have been married, and have never been able to get more than absolutely necessary clothing, and sometimes hardly that, my heart has still been just as much upon the world as it was before, only in a different way. But one night, when my child was very low, I thought that she must die. I thought she might die before the morning. I then asked myself, 'Can you say, "The will of the Lord be done?"' And I hope I have been brought to say so."

"If you have actually been brought," said I, "not in regard to your child only, but *in every thing*, sincerely to say, 'The will of the Lord be done,' you could not have received from God a greater blessing, than was that dangerous illness of your child. We should, however, understand that we are liable to great mistakes on the subject of resignation to the will of God. We delude ourselves most sadly upon this subject. By a great effort, perhaps, we bring ourselves to give

up to him an object of our love, when we feel that it is certainly, or very probably, to be taken from us; and when his providence in its removal is so very obvious, that it is impossible not to discern it. We give it up, because, in truth, we feel that we can retain it no longer. We do but submit, where we feel that resistance will be utterly in vain. Christian resignation, on the contrary, is the free act of a will which would not, even if it could, change the purposes of God. And, more than this, it is the act of a heart which desires and aims to bow itself always, and *in every thing*, to the Father's will. In reference to all its hopes, and fears, and interests, its daily desire and language will be, 'Thy will be done.' "

"So I think now," was the reply. "But I did not once think so. My temper is very quick, and I am very apt to speak as I should not. I believe many parents injure their children very much by their passionate manner of speaking to them. This I know is my great danger; but I am trying hard to obtain a government of my words and feelings."

"You are doing more for your children," I replied, "by acquiring this self-government, — this government of your own temper, — than all which books, or than all perhaps which their future teachers, could do for them. You resigned that little child to God when it was ill, — when you expected that it might die. You resigned it to him as his, and not your own. And is it not equally his now, as it would have been if it had died? And if it be his, and has been entrusted

by Him to your care, should it not every day, and in every thing, be treated as his? Should it not be resigned, or given up to God, in all your exertions and plans for it? And should you not in the same way resign to Him your whole self, your husband, and each of your children?"

"I know well," she said, "that it is no light thing to be a Christian. I am very far from being one yet. But I know that God will help them that help themselves. Our Saviour says, that 'God is more willing to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than is a father to give bread to his children;' and I hope I believe it. I hope I shall be enabled to ask aright for it."

"You *will* ask aright," I replied, "if you shall ask because you feel that you need, and actually *want* it. If you were hungry, and had no bread, and knew not where to obtain it except from myself, how would you ask me for it? Or if you knew that you were entirely dependent upon me, and without me could do nothing, and that you could receive nothing from me but by asking for what you need, how would you then ask? I fear we often ask God for spiritual blessings, of which we have no distinct and strong feeling of *want*. Our hearts, — the deep desires of our souls, are not in our prayers. If we really desired spiritual good, — the knowledge and love of God, of our Saviour, and of our duties, as we desire selfish and earthly gratifications; if we were as solicitous for treasures to be laid up in heaven, — or in the kingdom of heaven within us, — as we are for the outward possessions of the world; if our souls

were in as strong a sense *realities* to us, as are our bodies; and if we should feel and act upon the expectation of eternity, as we feel and act upon the expectation of to-morrow, — prayer would be a very different thing with us from what it now is. I now possess very much more of earthly and outward good, than you have. Yet all this good I shall soon leave, and for ever. What then shall I have to carry with me to the judgment-seat of Christ, and to the eternal life that is before me? Nothing except my principles, and desires, and affections. Nothing except what is *in my soul*. At that judgment-seat you and I shall appear; and we shall be just what we are as to our souls. If you shall then be found rich in the righteousness of the Gospel, strong in its power, filled with its light, you may be an angel of light, a blessed spirit among the spirits of the just. But let us not forget, that except we have the spirit of Christ, we are, and can be, none of his."

"O, I have much to learn, much to be forgiven, much to do," said Mrs. B——. "I think very differently from what I once thought upon all these things. I know there is no satisfaction but in a heart given up to God's will."

"It is even so," said I. "And remember, that trial will last as long as life, and danger as long as trial. You say you have an irritable temper, and that even amidst all your wants, you have indulged a worldly mind. Now let it be your care, I pray you, when you shall feel vexation, discontent, or any unchristian disposition, daily

to take up your cross, and to prove yourself to be a Christian. Take all possible care, when you shall pray, to pray aright; and you will find, as you have said, that 'God will help them that help themselves.'"

We now descended into a room below. It was occupied by a widow who has no children. She lives alone, is very industrious, and supports herself very comfortably. She was working at her washing-tub. I had no sooner taken a chair, than I observed a book of Hymns standing upright upon the mantel-piece near her, and kept open by two candlesticks which were so placed as to enable any one with ease to read the hymns upon the pages before us. Directing the eye of my friend to the book, I said to Mrs. M —, "I see how it is that you maintain the cheerfulness of your spirits at your work."

"Yes, sir," said she, with a smile expressive of the fulness of Christian cheerfulness. "If I forget a verse, I have but to look round and I get it in a moment. My Hymn-book is very good company."

"But do you not feel the want of other company?" asked my friend.

"O, I have very good neighbors," she replied. "It is very easy to be in company if one desires it. But one can be very happy also alone."

"It is a great good," I said, "to be able to be very happy alone. Or rather, it is a great good to be able to find happiness in one's own thoughts, in one's own mind. God made us indeed for society. But he made us also to find

our happiness in that very self-discipline, in those very internal exercises, of which no one can be a witness except himself. You are alone with respect to your fellow beings. You are never alone with respect to God. In the hymns which you sing, as I trust, you feel and enjoy his presence. Is this what you mean, when you say that you can be happy when alone?"

"I should hardly dare to say so much," she replied. "And yet my condition would be solitary indeed if I were without God and without Christ in the world."

"How little," said I, turning to my friend, "do they know of the highest earthly happiness, who are seeking it in a ceaseless round of ambition, or of vanity, or of the pursuit of gain, or of the low gratifications of sense, of appetite, or of any selfish or worldly passion! You see men in every direction toiling with all their might in hewing out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water. The human heart, like the grave, is every where crying, 'Give! give!' When, then, will men learn that human desires are insatiable, because the human soul is immortal? I was delighted a few days since, when reading Cousin's 'Report respecting Primary Instruction in Prussia,' with the remark, 'The human soul lives in the future. It is ambitious *because it is infinite.*' And is it not avaricious, ever hungering and thirsting, ever restless and dissatisfied, *because it is infinite?* Here is a great central truth, a great central light, which reveals recesses of the soul otherwise full of dark-

ness; which explains phenomena of our nature otherwise unaccountable; which illustrates and vindicates God's designs in our moral constitution, and in the circumstances in which he has placed us in this world, as no other principle can illustrate and vindicate them. Man, and every human being, is made for infinity, for eternity. The principles of the infinite, of the everlasting, belong as essentially to the human soul, as the circulation of the blood belongs to the physical system. This fact of our nature is daily forcing itself upon my observation. Here is one, who, from day to day, is earning her subsistence by the labor of her hands. Far the larger number of her hours are solitary. Yet she is not alone. She here holds communion with God, the infinite and everlasting One. She feels her immortality, and she is wishing to make every day a preparation for immortality. A stranger who should step in, would consider her as poor. If that stranger were a mere man of the world, he would think that she had but little to live for. And yet she possesses a treasure, and is daily accumulating a treasure, compared with which the collected spoils of all the conquerors that ever lived, and the collected wealth of the world, would be as nothing. For what," said I, turning to her, "would you relinquish your hope as a Christian?"

"O, not for the universe," she replied. "I know how unworthy I am of this hope. But I would not give it up for worlds."

"And on what do you build your hope?" asked my friend

"On the merciful promises of the Gospel," she replied. "I know I am not worthy of the least of God's blessings. I would pray continually, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' But I hope I do not live in any sin. I desire nothing so much as to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ."

"Let that constantly be the reigning desire of your soul," said I. "A meek and a quiet spirit in the sight of God is of great price. You cannot do any great thing, but you may do many small, and many important things for others. You may think justly and kindly of every one. You may freely and entirely forgive any who may injure you. You may perform offices of love for others, whenever you shall have opportunity to perform them. You may serve others as faithfully as you would wish, in a change of circumstances, to be served yourself. And you may daily read your Bible, and pray, and be looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. There is nothing greater, nothing more excellent upon the earth, nothing to be so much desired. The richest of all God's mercies are offered to the poor as freely as to the rich. They may be possessed as completely by the poorest, as by the richest. You may enjoy as much in this little room, as can be enjoyed on this side of heaven. Yes, even now, every day, you may have a foretaste of the blessedness of heaven;—for, in proportion as you shall be a Christian, *the kingdom of heaven will be within you.*"

"It is certainly a beautiful circumstance of Christianity," said my friend, "that it brings the objects to which itself attaches the greatest worth, within the reach even of those in the humblest conditions. That charity, or principle of love in the soul, which is exalted by Paul above the faith that could remove mountains, above the gift of prophecy or of tongues, above any possible contributions of money, and even above martyrdom, — that charity may be attained as largely, and possessed as perfectly, by the poor tenant of a small apartment like this, who is earning his or her daily bread by daily, and the severest toil, as by the most favored of all that live upon the earth. Surely the religion of Jesus is glad tidings to the poor. Surely the Gospel should be preached to the poor. What other blessing of any comparative worth can be extended to them?"

A few steps brought us to the residence of a poor woman who was very ill, and whom, therefore, I was desirous to see. My friend became thoughtful and silent, and I was willing to leave him to his thoughts. Our way to the room which I had in view was through the apartment of a widow. A bright and lively little girl, about nine years old, was sewing by the side of her mother. A boy of two or three years of age was enjoying the fulness of his own spirits in play; and his brother, about six years old, was sitting apart from the rest. I perceived that he had been crying. Having interchanged a few words with his mother, I said to him, "And what troubles you, my little boy?"

The mother answered, "Mrs. C—— has just had some wood brought to the door. James knew before he went to school that she was to have the wood, and he expected to go to the wharf for it. And now he is disappointed that it has come without any of his care concerning it. He is very glad to do any thing that he can for Mrs. C——."

"And how is Mrs. C——?" said I.

"Very low, sir," replied Mrs. P——; "she suffers very much. I think she can continue but for a short while."

The apartment of Mrs. C—— was separated from that of Mrs. P—— by a small passage-way. I was about to enter this passage-way, when my eye caught again the eye of the troubled little boy. I knew that his was the trouble of disappointed affection. He had wished to serve Mrs. C——, because she was wholly dependent upon kindness. There was no pride or vanity mingled with this desire of service in his mind. He had performed many offices of love for her, and had ministered much to her comfort by the errands he had done for her. I would not leave him, therefore, till I had given him a word of encouragement, and had made him distinctly know that I fully comprehended and appreciated his desire to serve and aid a suffering fellow being. The virtue of a child is aided by no means more effectually, than by the sympathy of those by whom he perceives that his feelings and objects are actually well understood; whose commendation and whose censures he alike feels to be just,

and who would neither deceive him, nor are to be deceived by him. A grateful and affectionate smile played over the face of this little boy when I had said to him, "I know how glad you would have been to do any thing for Mrs. C——; and I doubt not that you will have other opportunities of doing kind errands for her." This suggestion carried his thoughts to other opportunities of such services as he could render. He felt, too, that in myself he had a friend. He was, therefore, reconciled to his disappointment, and was happy.

We entered the room of Mrs. C——. She was bolstered up in her bed, that she might have the relief to be thus obtained from a perpetually recumbent posture. The lines of death were strong upon her countenance. As she opened her languid eye, and raised her drooping head, a fit of coughing immediately followed. Her nurse was her sister; and this sister had now watched with this poor invalid for four months. Mrs. C—— is the wife of one of those husbands, who might have been a respected and useful member of society, and a happy husband and father, had he not sunk into the debasement of intemperance. An unprincipled and reckless abandonment to his appetite for alcohol had brought him to incapacity for the charge of his family, and his wife and children to utter destitution. The children have, therefore, been taken under the care of some of their friends;—the husband and father is living in a distant town, a cumberer of the ground, a disgrace to his nature and his

name, and the mother of his children is about to die,—I should say, broken-hearted, were it not that she seems to have found a support, a consolation, a peace in believing, by which God, and Christ, and heaven, have become all in all to her soul. A short conversation was all that I could have with this poor sufferer. She could bear no more. Having prayed with her, I called her sister to a distance from the bed, that I might make a few inquiries respecting their immediate necessities.

“How long has your sister been ill?” said my friend to her.

“Four months, sir,” was the reply.

“And have you had the whole charge of her during this time?”

“I have, sir,” she replied; “except that, for a week past, Mrs. P——, who lives in the other room, has taken half of every night with me. If ever there was a Christian, Mrs. P—— is one.”

“If ever there was a Christian,” repeated the feeble voice from the bed, “Mrs. P—— is one. I don’t know what we could have done without her.”

“Yes,” said the sister; “she is far from being well herself, and she works hard from early morning till late at night; and she is not only ready always to do any thing which she can for us in the day, but she watches half the night too. I was ready to sink from want of sleep, and I thought I could not hold out much longer. But I find I can do very well with half a night’s sleep.”

"And how," said my friend, "has your sister been supplied with necessaries in her sickness? You, surely, in this respect can do but little for her."

"Yes, sir," she replied; "till lately, I have been able to do very well for her. I am a tailor-ess, and have had a good run of work. When my sister was first taken ill, I took her to my boarding-house, and with my earnings I was able to pay her board there. But as she became more ill, our expenses increased, and I was able to do less to meet them. I thought it more prudent, therefore, to take a room and to keep house. I can turn off considerable work still; but not enough to meet all our wants. Yet we have never suffered from the want of any thing."

"God will not forget your labor of love for your sister," said my friend.

"We have very kind friends, sir; Mrs. P—— is like a sister to us," was her reply.

Having bid good morning, and withdrawn, my friend immediately said to me, "Well, it is good to witness a scene like that. How beautiful is virtue when carried out in exercises like these! This simple, modest, self-sacrificing, and untiring sisterly affection and kindness will be

'Much loved in heaven, though little noticed here.'"

"There is great and dreadful vice," I said, "among the poor, as well as among those who are not poor; and in that wonderful compound called *character*, there is perhaps no case in which there is not an admixture of some evil. If, therefore, you go among men to seek for evil, you

may be very sure, that, sooner or later, you will find it every where. But it is not less true, that, if you connect yourself with as many as possible, for the purpose of finding *good*, whatever discouragements you may occasionally meet with, you may also find some element of goodness even in the most depraved. I have obtained access to hearts, and have gained their confidence, and I believe have been instrumental to them of some good, by a free and willing recognition of any good which I could discover in them,—when, had I shown myself suspicious, and disposed to unqualified censure, I might have been received with rudeness, and perhaps rejected even with outrage. A striking fact occurs to me in point here.

“Some time ago, a poor old woman came to my house. She was a most pitiable object. Having asked, ‘Are you Mr. ——?’ I answered, ‘I am. May I ask your name?’ She gave me her name; and immediately added, ‘I have travelled sixty miles to find my daughter; and I have been told you would help me to find her.’ Wishing for further information, I asked, ‘Who directed you to me?’ She replied, ‘I have asked people in the streets if they knew her; and a gentleman told me to inquire for you; and I have at last found the way here.’ ‘And what is your daughter’s name?’ ‘Caroline W——.’ ‘Ah! yes, I know her.’ This young creature was at that time but sixteen years old; and I had seen her, I think nearly a year before, in the House of Correction. She was at that very time also, I knew, in one

of the vilest houses of the city. I assured the mother, that if it should be practicable, she should see her daughter. We agreed upon a place at which the mother should be found, and I availed myself of the earliest opportunity to go in search of her child. I will not describe to you the scene which passed in the den of iniquity to which I had been thus led. You can, however, hardly conceive of any thing more horrible. It was denied again and again that the child was there. Yet I had been assured that she went there when she left the prison, and I had not a doubt that she was there still. Immediately after leaving the house, I saw a woman at a neighboring door, — of a most abandoned character indeed, — to whom I expressed my desire of finding Caroline W——, that I might persuade her to visit her mother, who was in the city, and who had come sixty miles to see her. I had seen this woman on a sick bed, and even there had been wholly unsuccessful in my endeavors to awaken her conscience, and to bring her to repentance. But no sooner had I told her my object, than she asked, with great earnestness, and apparent emotion, ‘Is it her *mother* wants to see her?’ ‘It is,’ I said; ‘a poor, aged, afflicted, feeble mother; and I shall be greatly obliged if you will aid me in bringing them together. Does not Caroline live in that house?’ pointing to the house I had just left. ‘She does,’ replied this woman; ‘and her mother *shall* see her.’ I told her where the mother was, and the time at which she would hope to see her child. At the appointed hour I went to see the mother, and found

her daughter with her. Facts like this make me feel, that, great and deep as may be the depravity of any one, it yet is not total. There are elements in the worst, of which we may avail ourselves for their improvement. I would never give up a human being."

"But do you not find the poor to a great extent selfish, and hard-hearted towards each other?" said my friend.

"Yes, often," I replied. "But much more frequently disposed to acts of kindness towards each other. There are very generous spirits among the poor, who would cheerfully share their last loaf with a suffering neighbor. It is not uncommon, as I pass from house to house, to find a child coming in to borrow one and another of those articles which are not possessed by its parents, and which are often loaned by those who perhaps at the same time are wanting them for use. One will take the charge for hours, or a day, of the children of another who has gone from home to work. And great is the kindness which is often called forth by sickness in a family. Every kind of service is rendered through the day, and for many successive days; and she who has toiled through the day, and has put forth all her strength, in the confidence of a long night of repose, will give the night of that weary day to watching, even when to-morrow, it may be, she must work, and will be expected to work, as if she still possessed all the freshness of her strength. But here we are very near to one who has for years been entirely confined to the small apartment in

which she lives. She is scarcely capable of more than a removal from her bed to a chair, and from her chair to her bed. I have known her for seven years; and I have never seen her in the exercise of a disposition, or feeling, under the full exercise of which she might not welcome death. Will you pass a few moments with her!"

We entered a gate, and in the back part of the house I guided my friend up a dark flight of very narrow stairs. A gentle tap at the door soon brought her to it, whom we had called to see. The room measured about ten by twelve or fourteen feet; and in not more than half of it could we stand upright. The invalid was sitting over two brands, the ends of which were brought together to keep the fire; and the deficiency of the warmth thus obtained was supplied by such coverings as she could wrap about her. I introduced my friend, whom she heartily welcomed.

"You are not alone," said I, as I laid my hand upon the Bible, which was lying open near her, on the foot of her bed. "You *know* in whom you believe."

Her countenance kindled even to an expression of delight, as she replied, "Yes, I *do* know in whom I believe, and I am *persuaded* that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him. I am *not* alone; for I do know that the Father is with me. What a blessed book it is! I should have no comfort without it."

"Can you read much?" asked my friend.

"I cannot read much at a time," she answered;

"but if I read a very little, I have enough to think of for a long while." Then, turning to me, she added, "I have been reading other good books for a long while, but I have lately determined that I will read nothing but the Bible. I never read it without finding some new thoughts awakened in my mind. However old the words are, I find more and more light in them."

"And what parts of the Bible do you like most to read?" asked my friend.

"In the Old Testament, I like best to read the Psalms and Isaiah. But I read principally the New Testament. I wish every body knew how happy the Bible might make them. It is very easy to bear pain, and I should think it would be easy to bear any thing, if we really believe that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are sent to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

"Ay," said I; "if we *really believe*. I take it, that really to believe means nothing less, than so to believe as actually to feel the *reality* of the objects of our faith. If the presence of God be a reality to my soul; if my spiritual and immortal nature be to me a reality; if Jesus Christ, as my Saviour, and the Saviour of all who believe, be to me a reality; if conscience and duty, if judgment and eternity, and if all which is comprehended in the plain promises of Christ, be to me realities, I shall a thousand and a thousand times prefer to pluck out a right eye, or to cut off a right arm, than, by the violation of my duty, to

cut myself off from the approbation of my God and my Saviour. Happy they who thus find in their faith the very substance of the things hoped for, and thus an evidence, in which they feel that they cannot be deceived, of the things that are unseen."

"Well," was the reply, "I do feel an unspeakable happiness in believing. I think I can say that I do love God, and all the creatures of God; and I do want nothing so much as to know him better, that I may love and serve him better."

"Do you suffer much?" inquired my friend.

"O yes, sir," she replied. "I often pass the whole night without sleep. I am in so much pain that I cannot sleep. It is rheumatism which has reduced me so low. But I know a great deal of Scripture by heart, and I know a great many hymns; and these are a great comfort to me. I often think in the night, that I wish every one who is lying upon a bed of down was as happy as I am. I don't doubt that many are, but I wish that every body was."

"I wish, indeed," said my friend, "that every one was as happy. I suppose you have good friends who are very kind to you."

"Yes, sir, I have excellent friends. I want but little, for I can take but little food. There are Christian ladies,"—she named them,—"one or another of whom calls upon me every week, and all are willing to do for me; and my neighbors too, though they are poor, are very kind. I am sure I don't know what I could do without them. God has never left me long to want any thing that

has been necessary for me; and I am not afraid that He ever will leave or forsake me."

In conversation such as this we passed ten or fifteen minutes. When we had returned to the street, I said to my friend, "Who could pass half an hour in that chamber, and doubt that religion is a reality?"

"Even so," said he. "And how alive is her heart to every thing which concerns the good and happiness of others! Not a word escaped her of reproach, or of censure. I have often been surprised at remarking, how essential a part of their own goodness some people have thought their suspicion of the goodness of others to be; and their harsh, ungenerous, and unjust judgments of others. In what sect would you place this poor woman?"

"In no sect. You see that she has no *shibboleth*. Fourteen years ago, when she was connected with society as she now is not, she belonged to the denomination of the ———. When I first became acquainted with her, more than seven years ago, she had been for a long while too feeble to go abroad. During that time, few had sympathized with her; and no one had visited her as a religious friend. In my early acquaintance with her, she used the technics of the party with which she had associated. I took no notice of these in my conversations with her, and they gradually disappeared; and with them, if she ever had any narrowness, that narrowness passed away. I assume nothing as her teacher, for in truth she also is one to whom I have gone rather as a learner. Her heart is open to every human interest, to all

which concerns human well-being. If the heart's desires and prayers for others' good, and its full and holy joy in others' happiness, may be accounted Christian benevolence in the cases where nothing beside can be done to manifest it, then do I heartily believe that Jesus would say of this woman, 'She hath done what she could.' "

My friend was about to leave me. But I begged him to make one more call with me. A walk of a few minutes brought us to a narrow passage, through which we descended to a range of old ten-foot buildings, at the door of one of which I knocked. A colored woman opened the door, and we entered. In a large chair sat another colored woman, greatly swollen with dropsy.

"How do you do to-day, Susan?" said I, addressing her.

"I have been very ill, sir," she replied, "and have hardly slept for three nights. And Mary has had as little sleep as myself. I am afraid she will be quite worn out with me. It is too much to work as hard as she does, and then to have little or no sleep."

"I do not believe that you will complain, Mary," said I. "You do not look discontented."

"I? No sir," said Mary. "What is the loss of a little sleep, compared with what Susan suffers? I have a very good appetite; and I am sure, that the least which the well can do is to take care of the sick."

"And are you Susan's nurse?" asked my friend.

"Why, sir," said Mary, "I take care of her."

My husband is at sea, and I have no children; and I can therefore spare time to take care of her, as those cannot, who have children to take care of."

"Yes, sir," added Susan, "she does take care of me. She goes out to wash, when she can, for two or three hours, and earns what she can; and then comes here to take care of me. I could not move from my chair without her. She has taken care of me five months, and I hope the Lord will reward her for it. I am sure I don't know of any other reward she can look for."

My friend looked at Mary, and asked, "Do you receive no payment for your care of Susan?"

"No, sir," was her reply; "I am very willing to take care of her. While my husband is away, I am very glad to do what I can for her. I can earn something; and if a little wood is given to her, we get along very well."

"I should have died without her," said Susan. "I have none near me to whom I could have looked for such assistance. I could not get up, or go to bed, or turn in bed, or get any thing without her. I hope the Lord will reward her, and I believe he will."

"And I believe it too," said my friend with considerable emotion.

Our conversation was then directed to other topics; and having accomplished my purpose, we departed. A few steps brought us to the street, and I said, "Shall I now bid you good morning?"

"Not till I have told you," said he, "that you

have opened a new scene of life to me. I am aware that you have selected these cases with a reference to our rencounter this morning. You have done right. I want time for reflection upon what I have seen and heard; and if you please we will soon meet, and talk fully upon the subject."

"Yes," said I, "some of these are selected cases. But I could bring before you others of quite as highly interesting a character. I should be glad to bring before you other expositions of human nature and of society, which do not offer themselves for notice in your daily walks in life. But a case more extraordinary than any you have seen to-day came under my notice in my late visit to England; and if you would not be wearied by a detail, which it would probably require more than half an hour to give you, you shall have it if you will pass an hour of this evening with me."

"I will be with you," said he; and we parted.

CHAPTER III.

AN EVENING AT HOME.

"If it were more the practice for those who have homes to extend the blessing to those who have them not, there would be little occasion for Orphan Asylums."

At the appointed hour in the evening my friend was with me. Reader, will you imagine yourself

to be that friend, and allow me to give you my narrative as I gave it to him?

The last days of my residence in England, in June, 1834, were passed in the family of an intelligent, opulent, and philanthropic merchant, every member of which was imbued with the spirit of Christian benevolence. Mr. G. was all but an actual martyr to the great interests on which he felt that the well-being of his country essentially depended; and with equal energy and zeal, and at the same time with a quietness and simplicity which asked not, and would avoid observation, his wife was extending improvement and happiness through a large circle of the poor, who looked to her as a guide, benefactor, and friend. When abroad one afternoon with a member of this family, we met a poor woman, who addressed the lady who was with me. A few words passed between them, and the woman left us.

"There is great sensibility," said I, "and great strength of character, in that countenance."

"That woman," said the lady, "has five orphan children living with her, whom she is bringing up as her own."

"Five orphan children!" said I. "How can she provide for them? Her dress indicates poverty. Is she not poor?"

"She is wonderfully industrious and clever," said the lady. "She occasionally receives some aid from our family. But it is surprising how much she does for her. If she has always been dependent for her daily bread upon the daily

united labors of her husband and herself. She, however, is the soul of the family; and for the last eight or nine years she has always had two or more orphans in her charge; keeping up the number she could support, by finding new ones as often as she could advantageously dispose of any that were in her care. She has thus already, I believe, trained fourteen such children for employments in which they can provide for themselves."

"I must know her," said I. "I will beg Mrs. G—— to take me to her to-morrow." My request was accordingly made for an introduction to this woman; and on the succeeding day I had the gratification of visiting her.

Never shall I forget the hour which I passed in the little parlor of her neat and comfortable dwelling. She lived in one of the most obscure and dirty streets of an old, large, thronged, busy town. Her habitation was one for which no proprietor could have looked for a tenant, to any one of a higher class than that of a laborer. Yet, beside the little parlor of which I have spoken, there was, connected with it, a small kitchen; and over these, two or three chambers, and an attic which might be used for sleeping apartments. The parlor was certainly a comfortable one, because every thing in it was not only quite clean, and in its proper place, but because it actually contained all the essentials of comfort. It contained a sufficient number of plain, but strong and good chairs; a good table, large enough to receive the family around it; an old-fashioned,

but very useful desk, with ample drawers beneath; a grate, large enough for a fire which would warm the room; windows, which had not in them a broken pane of glass; and a closet, whose open door displayed a goodly array of common crockery, so arranged as to give due conspicuousness to a few small, but richer articles of the same kind, and therefore so placed as to obtain for them the greatest notice.

It is impossible that manners should have been more respectful, and at the same time more simple and natural, than those of Mrs. W ——. She was one of many who looked to Mrs. G —— for sympathy, for counsel, for the offices of Christian friendship, and for relief of the heart in those difficulties and struggles, in which no want is so strongly felt, as of a Christian friend. She was accustomed to apply to Mrs. G ——, as to a mother. As a friend of Mrs. G ——, I was therefore cheerfully welcomed, and the five orphans were soon called in. They were, I think, from seven or eight, to thirteen or fourteen years of age. They were all girls. The spectacle was a very touching one; and no small self-restraint was required for the withholding of expressions, which would have been no exaggeration of my own feelings, but which, even if they should not excite her vanity, I was aware might endanger the child-like single-mindedness with which she obviously regarded the rescue of these children from ruin. I inquired, therefore, of the parentage of these children; heard them read, that I

might know she had been careful of their instruction; talked with them of their employments, and duties, and happiness; and then, having said to Mrs. G——, “how much better suited to their future usefulness and happiness is the education which these children are receiving here, than would be any which they could receive in an Asylum for Orphans!” Mrs. W—— at once replied, “Asylums may be good, but they are not like families. They are not like *home*. Children lose a great deal by living where they can never say *father*, *mother*. I think it very important in the education of children, that they should be accustomed to the feelings and affections which are connected with every day saying *father* and *mother*. God has taken away the parents of these children. But there are enough in the world who might be as parents to all the orphans that are in it. I don’t believe that I have ever been the poorer for any thing I ever did to help any poor child that had lost its father or its mother.”

“Ay,” replied I; “nor do I know any thing more important in early training, than this education of the heart, — of the affections. These children, I suppose, call you *mother*.”

“To be sure, sir; and I look upon them as my own. He that gave me my own, gave me also these; and he gave them to me that I might be to them as a mother.”

“And then, Catharine,” said Mrs. G——, “I think they will be better fitted for service, and to earn an honest living, as you will bring them up,

than they could have been if brought up with large numbers in an Asylum. You can train them to every kind of household work, as they could not be trained where very many are together in one great house. I think too, you can do more for the good government of their tempers, and in exciting a cheerful and kindly spirit in work, than could be done for them in any large institution."

"I think so too, ma'am," said Catharine. "These girls have nothing but their character to depend upon. Now I tell them it was just so with myself; and that God will help them that watch over themselves. If a girl is not made to feel this early, it may be very difficult afterwards to make her feel it."

"You, I doubt not," I said to her, "in all this, are speaking the language of your own experience. There is indeed no teacher, who may be compared to a conscientious and faithful mother. Whatever benefactor we may remember, even after a long life, in which we have experienced the greatest kindnesses, the heart rests itself at last with the highest gratitude and delight upon the recollections of the days and scenes, in which, with every gratification and every pain, is associated our mother's interest in us, her sympathy with us, her tender, true, deep, and unwearied love for us. O my mother! When I forget thee ——"

I paused. Each of us was silent for a moment. Then said Mrs. W ——, "Ah, sir, it was but for a short while that I knew any thing of a

mother's care. I was born in poverty, and left my mother when nine years old. But God blessed me as few poor children are blessed; for, in faithful care and true kindness, my mistress was as the best of mothers to me. I left her in '97, when I was only eleven years old. But her words are precious to me, and are deep graven in my heart. She would say, 'Catharine, I am going out.' And then she would be carried out in her sedan. She was too lame to walk, and could not easily get into a coach. I used to take a little basket and go by her side. We would soon stop at a cellar. Then she would say, 'Catharine, go into the cellar, and see how the poor woman is to-day.' And when I had come out again, she would say, 'How does she look? Is there any fire in the grate? Are there any coals in the house?' Then she would send me for any thing that was wanted. And when we had come home, she would say, 'Go put your feet upon the fender, and dry them, and tell me what you think of what you have seen.' Then she would say, 'Catharine, poverty will probably be your portion. But you have one talent, which you may use for the good of others. You may sometimes read half an hour to a poor sick neighbor. You may read a chapter of the Bible to her when she could not read it herself; or you may run on errands for those who have no one else to go for them. Promise me then, my child, that you will try to do what you can for others; and I hope we may meet in another world, where I shall be thankful to see you before me.' O, there are few like

her." She was greatly overcome by this effusion of her sensibility and gratitude.

"You have indeed," I said, "received the best possible education. Your benefactress is worthy of all your gratitude. You have been taught Christian benevolence, at least, in the best possible manner, — I mean, at once by the example of your teacher, and by the daily practice of it to which she brought you, while you were in her service. Many think that they have done a great deal, when they have taught a poor child to read. But your mistress did you a far higher kindness, when she taught you how to make your knowledge of reading a comfort and blessing to others."

"My mistress, sir, was a Christian. She taught me that I had a soul, and a Heavenly Father; and that there is no happiness except in doing our duty. I did not then think much of those things. But when I came to leave her, I never could think of her without remembering the good lessons and the good example she had given me."

"You have said that you left your mistress in 1797. Did you then return to your parents?"

"No, sir. In '97, when I was eleven years old, my brother and I were sent apprentices to a cotton-mill; and if ever there was a heaven upon earth, it was the apprentice-house of that mill, where we were brought up *in such ignorance of evil*; and where Mr. Norton, the manager of the mill, was a father to us all."

"I now fully understand," said I, "why it is

that you give so much importance to the sentiment of *home* in the education of children. You early left the home of your parents. But in your first removal you found *a mother*; and in your second, *a father*."

"Yes, I did, sir," she replied; "and many are the poor children, who are now living as my girls once lived, with parents who do not know how to take care of them; and if such children should be brought up by others, who would know how to be as a father and mother to them, instead of being ruined and miserable, they might be happy, and a means of happiness to many others."

Here was a very striking combination of simplicity with energy, of sensibility with judgment, and of forethought, calculation, and economy, with disinterestedness and self-sacrificing benevolence. Here were before me five young girls, orphans, whom this woman had taken into her house and her heart; for whose support she and her husband were leading a life of daily toil; and for the care of whom she sought, and wanted, no other remuneration than their virtue and happiness. I do not believe that any miser ever looked upon his treasure as a more precious possession, than these orphans were to her soul; and I believe that few parents feel a deeper solicitude for the character, or the advancement of their children, than she felt for the character and spiritual well-being of these parentless little ones. I will not say that I felt awed before her. But I will say, that I felt a sentiment of elevated admiration and of profound respect. I said to her,

"Have you ever had children of your own?" The deepest springs of her soul were touched by this inquiry.

"Yes, sir," she replied. "I have one, I hope, in heaven; and another — who is far from me, I know not where."

My friend, Mrs. G —, rose to take leave; and having spoken to Mrs. W — from the fulness of my own heart, as I thought proper, in reference to her children, we left her.

Reader, would you know more of Catharine W —? I am aware that you cannot feel the interest, which I feel in her; for I have seen her, and her orphans, and have conversed with them. Nor have I only heard her speaking to them, and of them. I can, imperfectly indeed, yet to some extent exactly, detail to you her very words. But I have no words by which I may adequately interpret to another mind the natural language of her eye, of her whole countenance, and of her whole manner. I never knew a more natural, artless being. "None of us," it has been said, "have yet heard, or can comprehend, the tone of voice, in which a man thoroughly impressed with the sentiment of that benevolence, which fully recognises the image of God in the human soul, would speak to a fellow creature; and no eloquence can achieve the wonders it is destined to accomplish." I can believe this. Or rather, I can believe that a simple, single-minded, cheerful, but self-sacrificing love, — the love which asks not, and thinks not of, observation, — which recognises God in all things as its own centre and

end, — and which goes forth to man, in every condition and every relation, as to a child of God; the love, which, while it deeply respects the spiritual and immortal nature in itself and others, and is mainly interested in its own, and the spiritual and eternal well-being of others, has yet a perfect sympathy with human weakness and exposures, and is perfectly and always just in all its judgments of right as well as of wrong in others; — I can and do believe, that this love is to express itself in the natural language of its own spirit and manners, with a power and efficacy, which no words alone can exert, or have ever reached. Its demeanor, its look, its tone, its air, untranslatable and indescribable, are yet perfectly to be comprehended by the soul, which has within it any accordant elements. I have seen something of the influence of this divine sentiment, when I have been with a Christian who preeminently possessed it; and, in seeing it, I have felt its wonderful power. I have seen it in men. But it is more frequently to be seen in women, and especially in some mothers. And the power of these mothers is paramount over the minds of their children, not only during the years of childhood, but even through life. Many a son and daughter, themselves parents, have been controlled by, and have bowed to, the authority of an aged mother's love, as they would have bowed to no other earthly power; and many a mother, when her remains have been mouldering in the grave, through the power of this love, has reigned in the hearts of her children till their last hour; the authority of the

sentiment acquiring new strength within them, as their own ripening affections have enabled them better to comprehend it. This heavenly sentiment was the main-spring in the soul of Catharine W ——. While I live, I shall feel that she has been a benefactor to my soul.

We left her; and I was solicitous to obtain all possible information concerning her. For the facts of the following narrative I am indebted to my friend, Mrs. G ——. I have therefore no doubt whatever of their truth.

“Catharine W ——, — known to the most intimate of her friends simply as Catharine, — or as she is sometimes called, ‘our good Catharine,’ was born in the year 1786. Her mother was a washerwoman, and her father was a soldier. The family were poor; and it was through their great poverty, that they became known to an infirm and venerable woman, a relative of mine, and one of the most excellent of our race. In order to relieve the parents, and to do what she might for the instruction of one of the children, my relative took Catharine to her own home. There she was taught to read; and there, as she has told you, she was trained not only to early habits of neatness and order, but to the practice as well as the knowledge of Christian dispositions and duties. You can have no better conception of the kind of education, which she received till she was eleven years old, than that which she gave you in her account of her visits with her mistress to the poor.

“I think it is not improbable that you may have

felt some surprise, that my relative should have transferred a little girl from her own care, to the hazards of a cotton-mill. The character, however, both of the owners, and of the superintendent of that mill, was well known, and was considered a sufficient pledge of the watchfulness and care which would be extended over the children in it. In this mill Catharine passed a few years, without distinguishing herself from the mass of her companions. She gave no indications of an improvement peculiarly gratifying to her employers. It is not unfrequently the case, that the seeds of moral and religious truth, which are sown in the young, are very slow in the process of germination. Let not this circumstance be overlooked. Religious teachers are often discouraged, because they see not the fruits of their labors. Yet, in truth, not an effort is lost which they are making to soften and to enrich the soil, and to extirpate the young tares, before they shall have struck deep their roots into the soul. Catharine at this time excited no attention as an uncommon child. Yet, not only did the benignant power of the instructions she then received appear afterwards in the remarkably upright course of her whole deportment, and in her grateful recollection of each of her instructors; but often have I heard her say, as she said to you, 'If ever there was a heaven upon earth, it was that apprentice-house, where we were brought up *in such ignorance of evil*; and where Mr. Norton, the manager of the mill, was *a father to us all.*' "

It is devoutly to be wished, that every one, who

may take the charge of a poor child, or of any child, should feel the responsibility, which belongs to this charge. A true Christian cannot but feel it, and feel it strongly. There is no higher responsibility to be assumed by man. The child we take into our service, however menial that service may be, is our fellow immortal, and a child of our own Father in heaven; and he, or she, who thus regards a child, whether that child be a pupil, an apprentice, or a servant, cannot fail to feel it to be his or her first duty, to do what may be done early to establish this young being in the principles and practice of Christian piety and virtue. To quote again the language of one, whom I gratefully acknowledge as one of the greatest of the earthly benefactors of my own mind, I would say, "Honor man from the beginning to the end of his earthly course. *Honor the child.* Welcome into being the infant, with a feeling of its mysterious grandeur; with the feeling, that an immortal existence has begun; that a spirit has been kindled, which is never to be quenched. *Honor the child.* On this principle all good education rests. Never shall we learn to train up a child in the way in which it should go, till we take it into our arms as Jesus did, and feel distinctly, that 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.' In that short sentence is taught the spirit of the true system of education; and for want of understanding it, little effectual aid, I fear, is yet given to the heavenly principle in the infant soul." Would that I could impress this great sentiment upon the soul of every parent, ,

master, and mistress in Christendom! The parent, master, or teacher may, or may not, at once see the reward of his labors. But then, should he not have this satisfaction, he will not be discouraged. He will not even relax his efforts. Mr. Norton never saw Catharine after she left the mill, in which she had been under his care; and never, probably, was he aware of the great influence he was exerting upon her mind. Yet it was by her education in the cotton-mill, which, in its great leading principles, was in perfect consistency with that of her earlier days, that her character was formed in the most susceptible and dangerous season of her life. It was this education, aided without doubt by strong natural dispositions to kindness (yet not stronger, I believe, than are to be found, and might be taken advantage of, in thousands with whom the whole process of education is thwarting and repressing them,) which made her what she now is in Christian benevolence.

"Catharine," continued Mrs. G——; "left the cotton-mill to service in a family; and here she fell under the care of one, than whom no one better understood the duties of a good housewife. Order was the great law of Mrs. P——'s domestic establishment; and whatever was done by her servants was sure to be well done. The influence is great,—far greater than is generally supposed,—which is exerted by the character and habits of a mistress, on those who are daily acting under her eye, and are subject to her authority. As I advance in life, I think less and less of pre-

ceptive teaching, or of direct inculcations. They seem to me to avail little with any, and least of all with the young. And, even where they act with any great power, it is in the cases in which they have incidentally fallen under the eye, or upon the ear of those, who have been brought to a self-application of them by some circumstances in their own experience, or observation, and not through the observation or experience of others. Catharine had worked very hard, and was capable of hard service. But she had as yet learned but little of the routine and discipline of domestic service. Here then, so far, she found in this family such a school as was required for her. And never was one better prepared for such a school. She was called to new duties. But all her principles and habits had tended, to her preparation for any duties to which she might be called. Here, therefore, she gained new strength to her principles, and to her habits of diligence, order and fidelity. So well trained indeed had been her mind,—so strong in her was the sense of right and duty, that even her ordinary domestic service tended to her religious education.

“And is it not the true idea of education, that it comprehends all the daily and hourly influences, small as well as great, of the circumstances by which we are surrounded, and which are constantly acting upon us; which are constantly bearing upon thought, and feeling, and every spring of action within us? I rejoice that it is beginning to be understood, that whatever acts upon our powers for their growth, or decrease, or

direction; whatever acts upon desire, appetite, or passion, to excite or to repress it, to gratify or to disappoint it; and whatever, either directly or indirectly, goes to the excitement and formation of dispositions, sentiments, principles, and habits, comes into the system, and is to be viewed and treated as a circumstance, or part of the system, of education. In this view of the subject, it is not a question whether children, or men, shall or shall not be educated. Education is constantly going on with every individual, old and young, from the first to the last hour of life; because every individual is, in every hour and every moment, acted upon by the circumstances amidst which he is placed; and because the influence of these circumstances upon him will be in accordance with the tastes and desires he is forming or has formed, the principles he is adopting or has adopted, and his strength or weakness in the application of principles to conduct. The child at home is educated far more by the examples which he sees, than by the lessons which he learns; and his soul is educating with far freer and stronger tendencies in his plays and in the streets, than in school and under the eye of his master.

“In the family of her second mistress, Catharine began to show the results of her education under my relative and in the cotton-mill. She was well prepared for the advanced stage to which she was brought in this family; and the consequence was, a proportionate advancement in her own character. And not only was she one of the most cheerful and faithful of servants. The

pleasure with which she was accustomed to render any assistance to her fellow servants was ever a matter of remark; and through this disposition, joined with a habit of accurate observation, she laid up a large stock of knowledge, which has since been invaluable to herself and others.

“Thus far the life of Catharine had nothing extraordinary in it; unless, indeed, it may be thought extraordinary, that in the stages through which we have passed with her, she should have fallen into the charge of those who strongly felt their responsibility as moral beings, and by whom she was consequently well instructed in her religious and moral duties. It is painful to be obliged to recur to such a fact as an extraordinary one; yet who can doubt that it is so?

“I think you will not be surprised, when I tell you that she married early. Wherever she was known, she was of course a great favorite. I strongly suspect, however, that her prevailing inducement to this change in her condition, was the hope of being able more satisfactorily to take the charge of her mother, who had now become very infirm and dependent. This parent could not but have been to her an object of deep solicitude; and in her habitation you may be sure that her disabled mother at once found a home; and was the object of a care as affectionate and solicitous, as ever was extended by a child to a parent. Catharine’s first husband, however, — for she has now a second, — went to sea, and was lost there, the vessel in which he sailed having foundered. This was just before the birth of her second son.

“The infirmities of her mother had, in the meanwhile, been gradually but constantly increasing; and, a short time previous to her husband’s death, she had become blind and insane. What a change in Catharine’s condition from that in which, three years before, she had been a respected, and even beloved inmate of a family, where she had felt no responsibility but for services which scarcely called for self-denial; and where, if she had much to do for others, much also was constantly done for her. She was the mother of two boys; and now, when the resources derived from former services were exhausted, she had the sole charge devolved upon her of two infants, and of a blind and insane parent. In her prosperity, however, she had been educated for adversity. It was to be sure very early in life that she had been taken from a home of poverty. But while under the charge of her first mistress, she had seen poverty under a greater diversity of forms, than probably she could otherwise have seen it; and had not only been made an instrument of its relief, but had been taught to associate happiness with the privilege of relieving it. I know not that she afterwards continued in any similar connection with poor families. But I know that there had been a constant growth in her mind of gratitude to God, and of fidelity and kindness to those around her; and the maintenance of these virtues in prosperity, I believe to be the best preparation for any of the painful reverses of life. Such, in her case, they certainly proved to be. There was now a demand for all

her energy, and she met adversity with the energy which Christian principle only can inspire.

“The difficulty of obtaining work for women is always very great. There was much suffering among the operatives through the country, and among all who depended upon their daily labors for subsistence. The best resort of which Catharine could avail herself was a nail-factory, and she became a nail-maker. It was an employment at which she had never wrought. Yet small as might be her earnings in it, these were still precious to her as *her own earnings*. No one knew better than she how to receive a favor, or how to confer one. But she would not willingly receive the means of support from another, when she could earn them by her own industry. It is a literal truth, that she would work in this factory till her fingers were blistered, and she could do no more; and she would then remain at home, and poultice them till they should be sufficiently recovered to enable her to resume her work, and then would return to it. She and her mother at that time often suffered from hunger. At length her necessities became known to a kind friend, whose own means were small, but who yet contrived occasionally to furnish her with a good meal. Through this friend, also, she sometimes obtained a supply of flowers, or bouquets, by the sale of which she provided for her wants, when she had no other means of obtaining subsistence.

“In expedients like these she passed some years, during which the insanity of her mother was at times so outrageous, as greatly to endan-

ger any one who had the charge of her. Yet this charge she could not relinquish. She would not hear of the removal of her mother to a place of confinement. No labors for this mother, and no sufferings in the care of her, could enfeeble the sentiments of filial reverence and affection in her soul. At last, however, it became necessary for her mother's own safety, that she should be in the charge of those more competent to the task of restraining her; and she was removed to the workhouse. But the heart of the devoted daughter was still with her; and from week to week Catharine strained every nerve, and straitened herself in every way, that she might regularly carry to her mother every comfort she could procure for her.

“Nor were her trials those only of the early death of her husband, and the long insanity of her mother. Her eldest son was a severe sufferer from his birth, till the age of twenty, when he died. It is hardly to be conceived how much she did and endured for that boy. For weeks together, after a hard day's work, she would sometimes be up through the whole night, and often through the greater part of the night, kneeling by him, that he might have his arms around her neck for support, because he was unable to lie down. Her patience and her love seemed to be inexhaustible, and the strength which she obtained through her affections, almost miraculous. The lad was a dutiful and affectionate child. He had a heart like his mother's, strong alike both to love and to endure. For a time Catharine seemed

hardly able to sustain his loss. She could not sleep, and with difficulty could take even the smallest portion of food. But hers was not a mind which could be long concentrated upon itself. She could not long forget the sufferings of others, nor remember one sufferer with indifference. Her inability to sleep awakened the desire to pass her nights with the sick. She thought, too, that by usefulness to others, she should herself be comforted. She became, therefore, a watcher. She sought opportunities of ministering at sick beds. But this was a service which she could not endure long. It had, however, done much to bring her to resignation and peace, and thus to enable her with a more willing spirit to return to her accustomed duties.

“Still the image of her departed boy was ever before her. She had indeed another, who was quite as dear to her; a child, too, for whom she felt great anxiety. Her surviving son often gave her great pain. To us, who knew him well, the indications were even then strong, that he would inherit the insanity of his grandmother. He had, at times, an ungovernable wildness of manners, and was very troublesome, although, when not under any strong excitement, he was a very amiable, kind, and obedient boy. The care of a child like this might have seemed sufficient for the demands of any mother’s heart. But not so was it with Catharine’s. She would fill the vacuity in her house occasioned by the death of her eldest son; and, to use her own expressions, she ‘inquired for some family which wanted some one

to take care of some *tedious children*. Bereavement and affliction do not often produce such fruits of righteousness. She looked to 'tedious children' as a resource and scope of action for her heart. The enterprise was a novel one, and no difficulty was found in obtaining as many children as she could provide for. Since that time she has never, I believe, had less than two, three, or four orphans with her; and now, as you know, she has five.

"I have spoken of Catharine as a widow. But, not long after the death of her son, she married again; and in her second marriage she had the happiness to be connected with one, whose benevolence was as steady and as wise as her own. Her husband, like herself, has gone on working hard, and denying himself in many ways, that he might aid his sick neighbors, and provide for the orphans whom his wife has taken into her charge. This poor man has often walked the room, through a large part of the night, with one or another of the little ones in his arms when they were ill; and when others have laughed at him, or have reproached him with being 'bothered,' as they said, 'with other people's children,' his reply has been, 'What would have become of me, if no one had been kind to me, or had taken care of me?' He is, indeed, a very good man, very attentive to his religious duties, and takes care that all who are under his roof shall be attentive to theirs.

"I cannot give you the facts, which I know of this family, in the precise order in which they occurred. A full biography of John and Catharine W——, would, I think, be quite as curious

and interesting, and far more instructive, than that of many who have been lauded as the benefactors of their age.

“I know, however, the case of a widower in their neighborhood, a man very respectable in point of character, but dependent upon his daily labor for his daily bread, who, finding the charge of his three children to be too much for him, was very solicitous to have them under the care of Catharine. He proposed, therefore, to give her all that he could, thirty-four shillings a-week, if she would receive him and his children into her house. She acceded to the proposition and received them. This man lived seven years in the family of Mrs. W——; and, so anxious was he to do what he could in payment for the relief and comfort he received, that he never ceased from effort to the last, and was actually at his work on the day in which he died. This man was a Catholic. But he had married a Protestant, and had promised her that her children should be educated as Protestants. This promise he scrupulously fulfilled; and, after their mother’s death, he always went to a Protestant church, and took his children with him. Catharine, thinking that he was still a Catholic in his heart, was always careful, without saying any thing to him upon the subject, to provide fish for him on those days on which the Catholics do not eat flesh; and when she saw that he was soon to die, she sent for a Catholic priest. She said she thought ‘people always go fastest to heaven upon their own road.’ I shall not stop to discuss the serious question, which I know may be raised upon this sentiment.

I am only telling you what she said and did. This sentiment was a sober conviction in her mind, and she acted upon it. She had a sincere desire to be herself a follower of Christ; but she knew nothing more of parties, or of sects in religion, than the names of a very few of them. On his dying bed, this poor Catholic besought her to retain the charge of his children. She gave him her word that she would, and she admirably performed her promise. After a time, the youngest boy was placed in the Blue-Coat School, where she maintained a faithful supervision of him; and when he left it, she fitted him out for sea, and she has still the care of him whenever he returns from a voyage. The girl she kept two or three years, till she found a good place for her. And the eldest boy, owing to the failure of the master to whom he was apprenticed, has for several years been, and still is, a considerable expense to her. He is now indeed at a trade; but he has so small wages, that he is obliged to look to Mrs. W—— for much of his means of living.

“I am here reminded of another young man, a fellow apprentice of him whom I last mentioned. This young man, during his apprenticeship, earned only four shillings a week. His own father said, that he could not afford to keep him for so small a return as his wages. The anxiety and grief of his mother were extreme, and she was thinking very seriously of taking him from his trade, in the hope that he might in some way earn something more. She, however, applied to Catharine upon the subject; who, thinking it a hard case that he should give up his trade, told the

mother, that, on condition of the good conduct of the boy, she would receive him into her family. These two fellow apprentices had feeble health, and required more nourishing food than was necessary for healthy lads of their age. And this food Mrs. W—— was most careful to secure to them.

“I should before have told you, that, when Catharine worked in the nail-factory, she formed a friendship with another poor woman who worked there. This poor creature afterwards became blind and helpless. She had for some time previously been greatly disabled, and Catharine had never failed to do what she could for her. But now she took her to her own house, and for seven years supported her entirely. She carried her up stairs at night, and brought her down in the morning. This was during the illness of that son, of whose death I have told you. At length, when her son became so ill that she could not leave him, and her means of living were wholly unequal to the accumulated expense to which she was thus called, she sent her blind friend to the work-house. Yet her interest in this poor sufferer never declined. Her care for her was like that of a mother for a child. She never omitted once a week to send her a little tea and sugar, that she might not be made uncomfortable by a want of these accustomed gratifications. It so happened that this poor blind woman had a son in the work-house, who was a cripple, and nearly an idiot. The child was dear to his mother; and when she took her tea, she gave him a part of it. This became one of his highest gratifications;

and after the death of his mother, he was greatly distressed by the loss of this indulgence. Catharine therefore promised him, that while she lived, she would bring some tea and sugar for him, as she had brought them for his mother; and she has kept her word. This idiot boy still lives.

“It was not long ago that I called upon Catharine, and found an old woman with her who had a number of small parcels in her hand. On my noticing these parcels, she informed me that they contained a little tea, and sugar, and snuff; and that they were for four old women in the workhouse. These four old women, beside others, always drink tea with her whenever they are allowed to leave the workhouse. I said to her, ‘Catharine, you impoverish yourself too much by this provision for those who are in the charge of others.’ ‘They knew my parents,’ was her reply, ‘and I dare say assisted my mother when she needed. So it is just but a little acknowledgment. There are other old persons there to whom I would be glad to send something, if I had the means.’

“After Catharine left the nail-factory, she supported her insane mother and her two sons in part by a mangle. At that time, a poor man near her died of consumption. Catharine was much with him in his sickness; and finding that but little attention had been given to religion in the family, she became solicitous for the baptism of the children, and obtained it. At the death of this man, the family was left in great destitution. ‘What can I do for them?’ thought Catharine. She was

then using her mangle; but she offered to lend it to the widow, on the condition, that, if she should herself become the more needy of the two, it should be returned to her. The offer was accepted, and the mangle was removed. This widow lived seven years, during the last three of which she seemed to be dying of consumption; and the irritability of her temper increased with the progress of her disease. Yet Catharine ceased not from any of the kind offices she could render to her, although these very offices were often returned with abuse and calumny. Anxious for the children, she proposed that the eldest girl should go to service; that the two boys should be removed to her house, though their wages were insufficient for their support, and that the youngest girl should be placed in the Blue-Coat Hospital. Her advice was rejected, scorned, and resented. This family soon removed from the street where they had lived, that they might be at a greater distance from her, who was in truth their only friend upon the earth. There they fell into extreme distress from want. Catharine heard of their sufferings, sent to them what she could spare from her own resources, and applied to others for their relief. Yet such was the delicacy of her feelings, that she was very careful they should not know that what they had received came through her;—as she thought they would not like to have her know how low they had brought themselves. At last, the eldest boy fell into a consumption, and he sent to Catharine to beg that she would come to him. The mother's heart was in some measure softened. The boy

could not be made comfortable where he was, and Catharine took him to her own house. The next day she took also the youngest girl, and kept her till she could place her in the Blue-Coat School.

“Another circumstance may be mentioned here, which occurred during the widowhood of Catharine. At that time she was herself living in a cellar. Mrs. O’Brien, an Irish woman, and a neighbor, could nowhere obtain a room. ‘She must not die in the street,’ said Catharine. Yet what was to be done? Catharine lost no time in reasoning upon this question. The door of her cellar was opened, and Mrs. O’Brien and her children at once found a home there. In a fortnight this poor woman died. But, poor and outcast as she had been, her heart was bound up in her children, and her great solicitude in death was for them. With the full sympathies of a mother, Catharine promised to do for these children, as if they were her own. And this promise she has faithfully fulfilled. The eldest, a girl, I hope and trust will ever be as a daughter to her. The boy is still in the Blue-Coat School, and spends his holidays with her. She regularly goes to the school every month to see him, and two other boys who are there; and, as often as she goes, gives three pence to each of them for pocket-money.

“Another Irish woman, Bridget Mc Ann, was a common beggar. Her appearance indicated extreme distress and no inconsiderable disease. Yet she was unwilling to go into the Infirmary,

because she would there be separated from her children. Catharine visited this woman, and persuaded her to allow her eldest boy to be put into the workhouse; and took the youngest, about two years old, into her own charge. She nursed this child carefully; sent some of her own clothes to the mother; and took a change of clothes to her every week, and washed the dirty ones. Yet for all these offices she had scarcely any other return than reproaches and complaints. 'The clothes,' it was said, 'were not well washed, nor was any thing done for her as it should be done.' But Catharine was neither to be fatigued by service, nor discouraged by ingratitude. She felt the claims of weakness and ignorance and suffering in this poor beggar, far more strongly than she felt any injury to herself. She kept the child of this woman for some months, till the mother reclaimed it; and then gave up the charge of it, only because she was assured that the parents were then able to support it; and because she thought it wrong herself to support it, when its parents were fully able to provide for it, if they did not expend their money for spirits.

"At the first appearance of cholera in England, great anxiety was felt to guard as much as possible against it; and cleanliness seemed one of the most important precautions. Many of the poor, however, who lived in single rooms, and who had hitherto troubled themselves very little with washing, and had thought very little of cleanliness, now experienced great inconvenience and suffering from the difficulty of washing

and drying even the few clothes which they had, and which they were desirous of making clean. Even their bedding, in every part of it, was now to be thoroughly cleansed. Catharine had at that time removed to the house in which you visited her, where she has, as you know, a small kitchen. In this kitchen she has also a small boiler. There is a bit of a yard also belonging to the premises. She perceived at once, that, by fastening ropes from her back windows to the back of a house in an adjoining street, she could obtain a considerable accommodation for drying clothes. The doing of a kind office was with her simultaneous with the conception of the manner in which she might do it. Her ropes were made ready for hanging clothes to dry, and the free use of her kitchen and yard was offered to her poor neighbors. Nor was this all. Many of the poor had not a single pair of sheets, nor a change of linen. She took the charge therefore of some clothes, which were loaned for the use of these people. Many were thus enabled to be clean, who could not otherwise have been so; and so great has been the good derived to these families from this change in their condition, that the Provident District Society has been led to provide a common cellar, where eight of the poor can wash at once, and where from seventy to a hundred families now do their washing every week.

One of the first cases of cholera in this town was in the very street in which Catharine lives. It was the case of a widower, who had two

young children. At the time when he was taken ill, he was boarding with a poor woman. This woman, although exceedingly alarmed, attended him most carefully. Catharine herself had just recovered from an attack of the cholera morbus, and was warned that she would be particularly liable to the new disease. She went, notwithstanding, to see this man, who soon died. To prevent unnecessary exposure to the disease, the attending physician directed that the body should be buried *unwashed*. The orders of the physicians extended even to the *touching* of the bodies of the dead. They were therefore lifted into the coffin by the sheet upon which they had died. A report of this got abroad, and a crowd assembled about the house, threatening violence if the body were not washed before it was buried. Catharine said to them, 'we have done our part by nursing the man as long as life was in him. Now he is no more to us than he is to any of you. We have laid out the body according to the directions of the doctors; and if any one of you will come in, and wash it, we will provide every thing that is necessary for you.' The crowd dispersed quietly and quickly; and I need not say that the body was buried unwashed.

"A poor woman died of cholera in 1833, leaving a thriftless husband and five young children. This woman was a stranger to Catharine. She, however, was sent for when the woman was dying. The condition of the family was most deplorable. It was obvious that it must be broken up; and Catharine told the husband, that if he would go

to sea, and earn what he could for his children, she would take the charge of them during his absence. This he agreed to do. The children had been sadly neglected, and caused her much labor and anxiety. When the father returned, she had brought the children into something like habits of good order. They were also in good health, and were comfortably clothed. But her own health had failed, and she felt incapable of retaining the care of them. The expense, too, which they brought upon her, was more than she could bear. She therefore proposed to the father, that some one of his own family should take the charge of the children; and a sister of himself, or of his wife, consented to take them. Two or three months after this time, Mr. W — was passing through the street where these children lived. They saw him; and begged so hard to go back to his house, that he and his wife agreed to take both the children and their father. He was then out of work. The clothes both of the father and children were worn out, and the children were a good deal out of health. Catharine persuaded the father again to go to sea; and, having obtained a voyage, he left twenty shillings a month of his wages for the support of his children. But even this resource failed for a time, from a fear that the ship was lost,—which happily proved not to be the case. I told Catharine, that I would look at home for some clothes for these children. But she objected to this, saying, it was not right to burden me with any children she chose to take in. I should have told you, that the father of

these children is a Catholic. The children are therefore sent to the Catholic church. The eldest of them, a girl, had so many bad habits, and was such a mischief maker, that any one of less energy and perseverance than Catharine would have been tired out with her. But I trust that she is now beginning to repay her benefactress for the care and kindness which have been extended to her.

“The cholera, with us, principally attacked heads of families; and individuals were often seized with it in families in which there was neither food nor fuel. In many cases, indeed, it seemed to be occasioned by exhaustion from fatigue and the want of food. A rigorous quarantine was also maintained; and, consequently, there was a great failure of employment. Catharine divided her own stores, as far as she could, with the sufferers around her. A supply of oatmeal was given her, and with this she made porridge every morning for a number, who would otherwise probably have had no breakfast; and at one time she thus supplied sixty with daily food. Her husband every evening went three miles into the country for the milk for this porridge. After the first month of the disease, oatmeal was supplied by the Provident District Society.

“The labors of Mrs. W—— were not, however, confined to the preparation of nourishment for the well, or for the sick. Wherever the disease appeared, among those who knew her, her presence and aid were felt to be of high importance. The physicians were quite unable to meet the calls that were made upon them. She therefore

went to them for advice, administered the remedies which were prescribed, and carried back accounts of her patients. It seemed impossible that she should obtain rest either night or day. She found a vacant room, on the floor of which she could spread some bedding; and there she provided a lodging for families in which death had occurred, and whose rooms, it was thought, should be vacated for a time, that they might be purified. In cases of cholera, a supply of hot, dry linen was considered peculiarly desirable. Yet no one dared to wash the linen which had been used for a patient. Mrs. W — lent her whole stock of sheets and blankets,—it was not large, to be sure, but she lent it all,—for the use of the sick; and then she borrowed as far as she could from the Provident Society. A surgeon having told her, that, by mixing chloride of lime with the water in which clothes are washed, there would be no risk of infection to the washers, she applied to the Provident Society, and obtained the assistance by which the clothes of the sick could be washed. But neither for her own labors or risk in washing, nor for any of her services for her suffering neighbors, would she receive any compensation. No account was kept, during the first year, of the expense, either for washing, or for the linen which was loaned. But the establishment thus begun has been found so useful, that it is still maintained; and since that time, when cases of cholera have occurred, the medical gentlemen in attendance, or others in the neighborhood, have been accustomed to send a note with the clothes

which have been used by a cholera patient, or when a change of linen has been required for them; and hired washers have been obtained for the service of the sick. This plan has made neighbors willing to lend clothes and bedding, as it is now felt that there is no hazard incurred in lending them; and much has thus been added to the comfort of the sick. During the second year of the disease, in a week were washed in this establishment 140 dozen clothes for men and women, besides 158 sheets, 34 beds, 60 quilts, and 100 blankets. Many clothes were also buried with the dead.

“One of the very affecting circumstances of the prevalence of the cholera, was the spectacle of the large number of children who were running about quite neglected in the streets. These children were too young to be in school, and many of them were children of parents who were ill, or dying, or dead. Catharine could not overlook these children. She collected about twenty of them into her house; and one of her neighbors, who lived on the opposite side of the street, offered to assist her in the care of them. This neighbor amused the children by singing to them, by telling them stories, and by teaching them to repeat hymns. The number of the children soon became too large to be comfortably accommodated in Catharine’s little dwelling. It was resolved, therefore, to form them into a school. Thus without funds, or books, or even benches on which the little ones might sit, was begun the first Infant School now belonging to the city corporation.

The neighbor who first took the charge of these children, is now the mistress of this school, and obtains a comfortable maintenance from an employment which was begun in pure benevolence.

“The second year of the cholera found Catharine as active as the first. The first cases which came under her notice were those of a family, five in number, all of whom were ill. They, and two neighbors who went in to nurse them, died between Sunday and Thursday. Three were lying dead, or were dying, when she was called to them. They were in a cellar. The neighbors of these poor people entreated Mrs. W.—— not to enter the place; and some of them even held her back, that she might not enter it. ‘I must go,’ she said to them; ‘people must not die for want of help. There is no use in running away when the Lord sends us. If Jonah had gone to Nineveh, he never would have got into the whale’s belly.’

“Catharine’s husband is a laborer. He had long found employment under one master. His master died; and, from the fluctuating nature of the work of a laborer, he was sometimes wholly out of employment, and often could not obtain it for more than two or three days in the week. A whole week’s work was then considered a matter of great thankfulness. Under these circumstances, a demand for poor rates was made upon them. Mrs. W.—— appealed to the Select Vestry; and stated, as the ground on which she asked for exemption from this tax, that she had then in her house a family of orphans, which must

otherwise be maintained by the parish. Her statement was disbelieved, and exemption from the tax was decidedly refused her. One of the gentlemen present said, 'A very likely story this! I wonder who would take my children if I were to die. I would not take my own brother's children.' 'Yes, sir,' said Catharine; 'but you know God has not made us all alike. To some he gives a heart of stone, and to others a heart of flesh.'

"As a good fire is one of the temptations which attract to an ale-house, Catharine takes care in winter always to have one. To aid her in the support of her family, she often also received lodgers; and to make the house a pleasant resort to them, she borrowed books and newspapers for them, and would ask one to read aloud for the entertainment of the rest. Others were thus drawn to the house; and last year as many as ten met there every evening for some months. They clubbed together, and took three different penny magazines, and obtained tickets for the Mechanics' Library. As some of these were carpenters' apprentices, an older and clever workman was accustomed to give them a lesson upon their trade every evening before the reading began. Last spring one of these young men told Catharine of some others, who were working over hours at the yard where he worked, and who expended all which they so earned at an ale-house; and he begged her to find an opportunity to speak to them. She sent to four of them, requesting that they would come to her house. They went there; and she told them that if they would come every

night, they should have a good fire and a newspaper; and, if they would bring to her sixpence a week, she would lay it all out for them in a supper, and cook it for them.' She added, moreover, 'You may ask any of your acquaintance to join you, provided they are decent men, and will give up going to the ale-house.' She has also lent many Bibles and other good books to sailors, who were going to sea, and were unprovided with books; and several have thus been made sober and steady men, who were before intemperate and lawless.

"A few months since a man called upon Mrs W——, and told her he had heard that she took in orphans. 'Will you, for the love of God,' asked this man, 'take in a poor boy that has got into bad ways, — I believe principally from want?' The appeal was a strong one, and Catharine felt all its power. Her responsibilities were indeed already great enough; but she could not promptly avail herself of these for self-justification in a refusal of this request. The man added, 'by what contrivance did you make so good a boy of Willie B——? I never saw a boy so changed as he is.' Catharine consented, and the boy was soon a member of her family. This boy is now fourteen years old. Yet he had been convicted of crime, and was just out of prison when he came under the charge of Mrs. W——. He was almost destitute of apparel, and Catharine on this occasion applied to me for some of my boys cast off clothes. He is now, apparently, as good a boy as can be.

“ I have known Catharine twenty years, and I have generally seen her once a week during the last seven years. I believe, indeed, that no one knows as much of her as I know; and I consider my knowledge of her to be one of my greatest privileges. Yet I have given you only a few facts concerning her. I cannot convey to you, or to any one, my impressions of her character. You will be able, from what I have told you, to form some conception, — and yet it will be a feeble one, — of her exertions, her privations and her sufferings. In my intercourse with her, her orphans, her household affairs and her daily self-sacrifices are generally kept in the back ground. There is constantly some new call of duty, or of benevolent interest, which occupies our attention. I wish that I could give you a journal of a week or a fortnight passed in her house. I have known her to be called two miles from home by a friend, whose husband was dying; and having returned home through snow, and wind and rain, at two o'clock in the morning, she has suddenly been summoned away again by as urgent a call, which she could not reject. At another time she has passed half the night in a hot garret; and when fatigued and heated by the most active services there, she has gone into a damp cellar, in which there was no fire, to visit one who was near to death; and has there taken off her own flannel, and wrapped it about the sufferer before her. I have known her give the only good pair of shoes she had to a young man, one of her orphans, because, as she said, ‘ he must go to work decent,

and she could not buy a pair.' These, however, are but specimens of facts of daily occurrence. She does not often get a quiet night's rest, or a quiet meal, such is the urgency of the calls which are made upon her; and though the want of sleep, and of food, and of proper clothing, she has repeatedly been brought very low by illness. She cannot sleep while she feels that a sick neighbor is counting the moments in expectation of seeing her; nor can she take her food as leisurely as she should take it, while she is entreated 'for God's sake not to delay.' Yet once when I found her very ill, she would not send for a physician, — 'because it was wet and windy; and because he' — her physician — 'is a man of delicate health; and, please God she should be spared till to-morrow, she would try to get up to his house before he went out.' And on the very night of that illness, hearing that a poor boy who lived on the opposite side of the street was very low, and very desirous of seeing her, she went to him; and at her return, fainted, and for four hours lay apparently dead. The pressure upon her of such sympathy as she feels with so many, and of such thought as she takes for their concerns here and hereafter, is more than she can bear. I wish you could be a witness of the intensity of her sensibilities when she is doing what she can for the dying. This arises in part from sympathy with them in 'the awfulness of their situation;' and partly from the thought of her own death, — 'how little prepared she is herself for death, and how worldly is her own heart.' In a conversation

I have very recently had with her, I found her mind much affected, and even depressed, by her deep convictions of her own unworthiness. The peculiar ground of her suffering was, what she called her *worldliness*. And when I inquired what she meant by her worldliness, I found it was, that her 'worldly anxieties would intrude themselves into her prayers.' In talking over this subject with her, she acknowledged that much of this suffering was probably to be ascribed to the enfeebled state of her health, which 'prevented her being able to collect her mind, and to set aside new cases of claims upon her as she otherwise might have done.'—But I always fear to repeat her expressions, lest they should seem exaggerated. A narrative of the intercourse of a few days with her, in which her own language should be precisely stated, would give you such a conception as could not otherwise be given, at once of the activity and resources of her benevolence, of her deep piety, and of the singular simplicity and sincerity of her character. She will, in truth, be a martyr to her benevolence. It cannot be otherwise. She is already greatly broken down by her self-denials, and her exertions. Yet if she is extravagant, it is only in acting out her sense of duty. This is the great spring of impulse in her soul. She certainly does nothing for fame, — nothing for effect. She is scarcely known except among the poor; and not only would she not seek to be known, but I believe she would dread nothing so much as notoriety, — except sin. Humility, and singleness of

purpose, are quite as distinguishing traits of her character as benevolence. A more childlike and truthful being I never knew.

“ You may ask me how it is possible, in employments like theirs, that these excellent people should have earned enough for the maintenance of all these charities? And in reply, I can assure you that they receive surprisingly little aid from others. I know that Catharine boils every day two measures of potatoes, which is a third more than is required for her family. ‘ There are many children about,’ she says, ‘ who have not even a potato.’ Of meat she has but little, and that of the coarsest kind;—and stews it. She never roasts. On Sunday she always fills her pot of four gallons, and makes broth. Reserving enough for her family, she sends all that can be spared to some poor old women, and to the sick. It is also not unfrequently the case, on that day, that six or eight poor old women call upon her for a dinner; and then her broth is made proportionally weaker. Milk she considers a luxury quite beyond her reach. When work is to be carried further than usual into the evening, a potato pie is provided, which is made savory with onions, or pepper. I believe that more self-indulgence than this, in regard to appetite, is not known in her family. And not only was I slow at understanding, or believing her character, but I was as incredulous as any one could be respecting it, till I had most thoroughly investigated it. And never have I known such a union of liberality with the strictest economy and self-denial. Here is the great

secret of her charity. Cheerful and persevering labor, with rigorous economy, will accomplish wonders. How many have thus been raised from poverty to the greatest affluence! Let any one be as industrious, as saving and as self-denying as she has been, and if he shall not be as benevolent, it will not be because he will not have the power to be so.

“Catharine and her husband are striking illustrations of the proverb, ‘Where there is a will, there will be a way.’ I have often thought in regard to them, that ‘the blessing of the Lord indeed maketh rich.’ They have never seemed to have more than was sufficient for their immediate and pressing necessities; and yet ‘the barrel of meal has not wasted with them, nor has the cruse of oil failed.’ Catharine turns every thing to account. I have known her to carry home fish bones, that she might stew them for the sick; and the remains of damsons and currants, from which, when boiled over again, she would make a pleasant drink for fever-patients. Many Irish sailors bring her their clothes to be washed; and they often bring butter from Ireland for sale. Of this butter, they freely give her quite as much as she needs for her own use; and, without charging any commission, she sells for them all which they bring on their own account. When she washes for her own family, she will for weeks together take in also the clothes of her invalid neighbors, and gratuitously wash them. She is, indeed, strictly exact in the provision of food for her own family. Nothing unnecessary is allowed, and nothing is lost. She

will not eat, or place upon her table, the food which she thinks improper for those in her own condition. Her family must be satisfied with what she provides, be it little or much; and not unfrequently, even when their meal is small for themselves, it is shared with a neighbor who has less than they have. Nor is her economy less admirable in the wear and care of clothes for her husband, her orphans, and herself. Yet she is liberal in all her dealings. She rents her cellar for two shillings a week, although two and sixpence, and three shillings, are the usual price for such an apartment. She says her charge for it is high enough, and that the poor should not be hard to one another. The owner of the house in which she lives is a single lady, and a cripple. Catharine has been unwilling, therefore, to apply to her even for necessary repairs, and, as far as possible, has made those repairs herself. You have seen how clean every thing is about her. She bought paint, and painted her rooms with her own hand. Her husband receives his wages on Friday. The whole of these she intrusts to some poor women, who purchase certain goods which they sell in the market on Saturday, and make their returns to her on Saturday night. I know not that she has ever thus lost any thing, while the gain has been of considerable importance to those who have made it. She has mixed but little with her neighbors, except for such offices of kindness as she could render to them; and most unwillingly asks for any aid for her own personal friends. She is wonderfully fertile in expe-

dients for the assistance of others, and unwearied in carrying them through. It is quite astonishing how much she accomplishes. Though not without a rough kind of method, she has little talent for arrangement. But when arrangements are made for her, and she is started upon the right track, she never needs further instruction.

“With all these useful qualities for the everyday comfort of common life, she is a very humble Christian. She expresses great grief that her heart clings so strongly to the world, and says she has many faults which are known only to herself. She is a great talker; has many histories to relate, and an opinion to give upon all subjects within the range of her observation; but she has no fondness for talking either of what she has done, or is doing. She is sometimes hasty in her temper, but always very placable; and no ill usage can check her kindness except for a very short time. ‘How much more has God borne from me!’ is the constantly recurring thought which restrains her resentment, and calls up her sense of gratitude and obligation to her Heavenly Benefactor.

“The facts concerning her which I have given you, have come under my own observation; and even these are but a part of those which I might give. I have known cases of seamen, who have been nursed by her through long illness, and of whom I have first heard when I have been inquiring of her orphans, or of herself, from whom they had received some curious little presents which had been made to them. These presents were

acknowledgments of kindness from some of these sailors. A sudden and dangerous illness, into which she fell two years ago, brought to light her charities to many, of whom I had never heard till that illness. She, moreover, is most careful not to incur a debt. The energy with which she has maintained her sense of duty upon this subject is worthy of all praise; for, had she been embarrassed by debt, she could have carried through few of her plans of benevolence. I have several times within the last three years known her husband's Sunday clothes, and most of her own, to be pawned. But they were soon redeemed, and by the products of their own industry.

"I am aware that all which I have told you will convey but an inadequate conception of Catharine W——; of her constant exertions and sacrifices for the good of others; of her talent in turning every thing to account; and of making the twenty-four hours in each day go further than any one whom I know can make them go. All I know of her pecuniary resources is, that for cleaning some offices she receives two and sixpence a week. For superintending the washing department of the Provident Society, which requires great care to prevent waste, she has from three to six shillings a week. She has also eight shillings a week for the board of two young men; and her husband earns two and sixpence a day. She washes also, as I have said, for a number of sailors. It has been very painful to me to hear some of those whom she has assisted say, that she is paid for what she does for others. I have even heard

some of them say, that Mrs. W—— keeps for herself the good things which are sent to her care for others. They are much surprised, and think it wholly unaccountable, when I have told them, that what Catharine has done for them has been entirely from herself. She knows of this injustice which is done to her, and sometimes feels it strongly. But no one suffers from it except herself. I know not that it has not increased her kindness. It has certainly called forth many an expression of her sense of her own ingratitude to God; and of the duty of one freely to forgive, who herself has so much to be forgiven."

CHAPTER IV.

A REVIEW OF THE DAY.

It is a too common effect of privation and suffering, to chill the affections, and to contract the heart with selfishness. We see sad examples of this, even among those who have been very carefully educated. How highly then should we respect the indigent, when, instead of being chilled by adversity, and absorbed by the feeling of their own wants, they maintain the simplicity and warmth of their affections, and still know how to live for others, and in others!

Degerando.

THE friend to whom I had given the narrative of Catharine W——, had proved himself to be a good listener. He had not uttered a word through the whole of it. But my story having terminated abruptly, and a pause having ensued, he inquired, "Have you done?"

"I have," I said, "except indeed, that I have learned since I left her, that she has taken two other orphans into her family, in addition to the five which she had when I visited her. And now may I ask you what you think of her?"

"Think of her!" said my friend. "Why, I think her a being so extraordinary, that I am not prepared to talk of her. You seem to have no doubt of the truth of this relation."

"I have no doubt whatever of it," said I. "Her image is now very distinct in my mind. I told you that I was at her house. I went also with her, and my friend Mrs G——, to the room in which her Infant School is kept. This was at noon on Saturday, and the children had been dismissed, and had gone home; I therefore did not see them. But I have great pleasure even in a remembrance of the place. I believe that few biographies have been written with a closer adherence to facts, than I have maintained in this narrative."

"Well," said my friend, "comparisons are invidious, and I will not compare Catharine with any one. For the present, at least, she stands alone in my mind. I am constrained, however, to say, that not this evening only, but more than once to-day, I have been strongly rebuked by the examples you have brought before me, in a remembrance of the precepts, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;' and, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' If I have had a wandering thought through the last hour, it has been to the scene in which Jesus, when sitting over against the treasury,

pointed the attention of his disciples to the poor widow, who, amidst the throng of abundant givers, cast in her 'two mites,' — 'a farthing,' into the offerings for the temple-service. You have aided me to understand; as I did not before, the principles of that estimate of virtue, and of that judgment of character, which our Lord expressed when he said, 'This poor widow hath cast more in than all they that have cast into the treasury.' I admire the virtue of this noble woman, while I am humbled by the thought how far my own is below it."

"Like yourself," I said, "I feel the rebuke of the examples which have passed under our observation. I feel that others, beside Catharine W——, are better Christians, and far more exalted than I am. But is there not much also in these examples to gladden, to excite, and to encourage us? I delight in them peculiarly as expositions of human capacity in virtue; of the capacity of every individual, even in the humblest condition, for the highest virtue. Look at more than one whom we have visited to-day; or look at Catharine W——, as a poor, feeble, ignorant woman. To a passing stranger, such would either of them appear to be. And yet these poor, feeble, ignorant beings, have risen to an approximation and an assimilation to God, to a spirituality, a heavenly-mindedness, a qualification, if I may so say, for all which we can conceive of heaven, which almost make them living witnesses of the reality of the eternal life to which the Gospel calls us. Let us not then, my friend, value ourselves too highly for those outward and shad-

owly distinctions, which must all be left behind us at the grave, and in the remembrance of which we shall have no cause of exultation when we shall stand before our final Judge. Let us learn to respect the poor, as at least equally capable as ourselves of all which can make eternity a blessing. The image of God is in every human being. It is in him whom we see covered with rags, and incrustated with dirt; and even in him it may not be more marred, more defaced and worn, than in ourselves. Nay, the poorest in outward possessions may be the richest in the spirit of Christ, and in the elements of the immortal life."

"We start in life," said my friend, "with most erroneous notions upon all these subjects. We are educated for certain conditions in society, and for all the distinctions attainable in these conditions. The consequence is, we have little thought or care for any out of the circle in which we feel, or hope, that we are to move; and little regard for those within that circle, except as we consider them either as friendly towards us in our plans, or competitors with us for our objects. How very little sensibility is there, even in most professed Christians, to the Christian doctrine of human relations, to the true character and worth of Christian virtue! I received far more direct instruction in my youth, and, as I have no doubt it would have been thought, instruction of a higher order, than was given to Catharine W——. And yet she was far better educated than I was. I was educated primarily for knowledge, and a rank in life; she, for virtue, piety, and usefulness.

I was educated primarily for earth and time; she, for heaven and eternity."

"And yet," said I, "there is no incompatibility between these apparently opposite objects."

"By no means," said my friend. "I might not, and should not, make as much money in all cases, by acting out Christian principles in all my transactions with the world, as I might make by doing to others as I know that others will do to me. But suppose that I should not. Suppose that I should even make many and great sacrifices for the maintenance of a principle, by which I feel that I am to be judged before God. Can I be a Christian, and yet feel myself in this case to be a loser? And yet I believe that a thorough-going Christian would often gain as well as lose, by his fidelity to his principles. Nor can there be a doubt, that, if these principles were received and acted out by all, the gain to all, in happiness at least, would be immense."

"If," said I, repeating his words, "these principles were received by all, and acted out by all, the gain to all would be immense. This is acknowledged even by infidels. Infidels, however, are so far consistent, that they deny the very practicability of the great principles of the morality of the Gospel. Christians, on the other hand, or those called Christians, profess to receive these principles as the revealed will of God, and the rules of the judgment which awaits them; and yet, by some strange delusion, persuade themselves that they are at peace with God and in the way to heaven, while they have scarcely more regard to these principles in their daily conversation and

conduct, than if they utterly disbelieved them. The truth is, that there is a widely extended skepticism, even among the believers of our religion, respecting the practicability of its great and distinguishing precepts. It is felt,—and men act upon the feeling,—that we cannot love our neighbor as ourselves; and that we cannot safely, except in special cases, do to others as we would that others should do to us. I believe that Christians, through this skepticism, have done far more to obstruct and to keep down our religion, than has ever been done by infidels.”

“Catharine,” said my friend, “is certainly a noble example against this class of skeptics. I see not how these precepts could in the nature of things have been more faithfully acted out, than they were by her. It may indeed be said, that she has proved them to be very good rules of life for the poor; but that this will not prove them to be equally obligatory in their application to the rich.”

“It will be found at last,” said I, “that the New Testament gives but one rule of life, and of judgment, for the rich and for the poor. This principle pervades Christianity, and is one of its grandest characteristics. Whatever may be the inequality of outward conditions, or even of intellectual endowments among men, all, in the view of the Gospel, are upon a level before the heavenly Father, as alike his children; and no one can rise nearer to him than another, except through greater humility, truth, justice, purity, and love. See here the great evidence of the impartial, the

ever adorable goodness and love of the Father of all! It is very remarkable of our Saviour's teaching, that he hardly speaks to the rich, or of them, but for solemn admonition of the moral dangers which are incurred by those who have, or are seeking, great possessions. How many on the other hand, how touching, how affecting are his expressions of sympathy with the poor! What encouragements he addresses to them! What promises he holds out to them! And what a divine power is given to these encouragements and promises, by the associations in which the Gospel brings him before us, as himself, — although the Son of God, and the moral representative of God, — yet a poor man, who had not where to lay his head! Jesus teaches, as no one before had ever taught, that for humility, truth, justice, purity, love, and every grace and virtue of the Christian character, there is but one law, one standard. He addressed all as alike capable of a relative moral completeness, or perfection; and the great object of his religion is to bring all to this moral completeness. He would make the poorest laborer, the poorest dependent upon charity, as morally complete a being, as the most cultivated, opulent, and honored of our race. You have seen to-day, I think, that even the highest benevolence to which the Gospel calls its believers, is within the scope of those in very humble conditions. Or, I might still more broadly state this principle, and say, you have seen that moral good, — virtue in its most comprehensive sense, — holiness, — the love which is the end of the commandment and

the fulfilling of the law,—is equally attainable by every human being. And this, in the sight of God and of Christ, is as much above all outward attainments and possessions, as heaven is above the earth. Let us then, in our daily walks and intercourse, estimate virtue without respect of persons, as Jesus estimated it, and judge of character as he judged of it. Here is the true ground of that respect for our fellow beings, of that sympathy with them, and that interest in them, with which our religion would inspire all its believers. Not only Catharine W——, and some of those whom we visited this morning, but some even in a far humbler condition than they, may stand far higher in the eternal kingdom of God than we shall,—because they will more completely than ourselves have done the will of the Father, and have accomplished the ends of their stewardship. Let us bring home this sentiment to our souls, and retain it there, and faithfully follow out its excitements to fidelity in the use of our talents; and then, through the religious and moral advancement to which we may thus be brought, the poor may become far greater benefactors to us, than we, with all our alms-giving, may be to them."

"It is even so," said my friend. "I have felt to-day, as I could have felt from no abstract argument, how poor is that objection to God's providence, which is founded in the inequalities of outward circumstances among our race. Would that I might act, as I never have acted, upon the conviction, that moral good is indeed the supreme

good! May God save me from the 'wo' pronounced upon those who are rich, — because in their riches they have had their 'consolation,' and have nothing to look for beyond it."

"Let us not forget, however," said I, "that it is quite possible to be as unjust in our judgments of the rich, as of the poor; for injustice in either case is alike the violation of a great Christian principle. Our Lord certainly never intended to confound those distinctions in the organization of society, which are founded in the elementary principles of human nature, and in the necessities of a continually advancing civilization. On the contrary, it is quite apparent, that if Christian principles should be acted out in all the diversity of human conditions and employments, the tendency would be, in each, to an equally diversified relative moral perfection, and thus to an equalization of happiness, which no equalization of property could produce. The operative is as important a being in the sight of God and of Christ as is the capitalist; and he that serveth, as he that sitteth at meat. Nay, the servant may, at every step of his service, be advancing towards a world of ineffable light, while his master shall be daily groping his way into still deeper moral darkness; and the beggar may be ascending to the bosom of Abraham, while he who refused to him the crumbs which fell from his table may be wailing in torment. Yet the rich man may daily be accumulating riches, and at the same time daily be laying up for himself a treasure in heaven. The responsibility which our religion

attaches to riches is indeed a fearful one. I am amazed at nothing more, than at the daring with which men who call themselves Christians accumulate or inherit property, for themselves only, or for their families, in the very face of all those instructions of the Gospel, which are calling us to feel, and to act upon the feeling, that we are but *stewards* of whatever we receive; and that it will soon be our only honor, as stewards, to have been faithful to the ends for which our property has been intrusted to us. Let the rich learn to give with the spirit, the simplicity, and the conscientiousness of men who feel this, apportioning their contributions to the just demands of society for its various objects of improvement and happiness, and I verily believe that many might not give essentially more than they now give to one and another of these objects, while yet it would be written of them in heaven, 'They have done what they should do. Well done, good and faithful servants!' "

"But here lies the difficulty," said my friend. "We are conscientiously to apportion our charities to the fair demands of society. In the first place, what are these fair demands? And then, how much am I, and how much are others, bound to give as Christians?"

"It is not for me," said I, "to decide how much you, or any other, should in any given case, or upon the whole, bestow in charity. There is often great delusion in the judgments which we form of the property of others, and therefore of the means of giving. Many are thought to be

very rich, who, if they should die honest men, would not leave a shilling; and many are living in splendor, who, if they should conscientiously pay their just debts, could not possess a tenth, or a twentieth of the capital, the whole income of which is indispensable for the support of their large establishments. These men I consider as incomparably poorer, than are any whom we have visited to-day; and infinitely rather would I that my future condition should be with that of the beggar, who may die of want in the street, than with theirs who have fared sumptuously every day upon their unjust acquisitions.

“There are, however, those who are unequivocally rich, and of whom God will require that they have done very much for their suffering fellow beings; and there are those too, who, without having very great possessions, may be great benefactors to many who have nothing. Nay, the poor themselves are often among the greatest benefactors of the poor. There is often far more of self-sacrifice in their charities, than in ours. I will not ask, what have you or I done for the poor, in comparison with Catharine W——. But I may ask, what sympathy with suffering humanity have you or I felt, and what efforts for it have either of us made, in comparison even with the self-constituted parents of the twin children to whom I introduced you? Or, what benevolence of ours may be compared with that of the colored nurse, who has given five months of unremitted service to a poor dropsical colored woman, with whom she had no connection but

that of a common nature, and from whom she looked for no reward but the gratification of serving her?

"But, I repeat it, it is not for me to decide how much you, or another, can do in the cause of charity. Let each one determine the question of duty for himself, looking to his own final account, and solicitous only to approve himself to Him, from whom he received his stewardship, and to whom that account must be rendered. You and I shall be judged by the rule, 'Where much has been given, much also will be required.' Let us then be faithful in our personal application of the great precepts of our Lord and Master in regard to our duty to the poor. I do not believe that any truly honest and pure mind, which is sincerely desirous to do its duty, and its whole duty, upon this subject, will be exposed to any great mistakes upon the question, 'What are the fair demands of others upon me?' Our great deficiency in this respect, is, not of light to guide us, but of the single-mindedness and simplicity which will secure our fidelity to the light that God has given us. The Gospel is clear enough upon every question of duty; but worldliness and selfishness sadly blind our minds in the application of it."

"I believe you are right," said my friend. "And I am inclined to believe, that one of the most effectual means I can employ to keep alive, and in action, the sensibilities which have been excited in me to-day, will be, to acquaint myself in detail, as I have not done, with the condition

and necessities of our less favored fellow beings. It is one thing to read and to speculate about the poor in our comfortable parlors, and quite another thing to see them in their comfortless habitations. I do not indeed doubt that vice produces much of their discomfort. But whence comes their vice? Have we no accountableness for it?"

"That," I said, "is a great question, which I should like to discuss with you upon another occasion. It would require an entire evening; and if you will accompany me in my visits of another morning, I will then go over the ground of that question with you. We have had only a few gleams of great truths to-day. But they have come from scenes of real life, and I think you will find that they are not delusive. In view of the whole subject before us, allow me to say, that it is a great design of Christianity to call forth in every human being that sense of the paramount claims of his own spiritual and immortal nature, which will make this nature, both in himself and others, of greater worth in his estimation, than the whole outward universe of matter. And not less distinctly does it teach us, that there is no condition or employment so humble, that the highest conceivable moral attainments, and therefore that the highest happiness, may not be found in it. Here is the broad and deep ground on which it would establish and build up its great precepts, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;' and 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' It is the ground of a common spiritual nature in every

human being, which is to survive this outward universe of matter. It is the ground of a spiritual and immortal brotherhood among the children of an Infinite Father; the children of a Father, as accessible by the poorest, as by the richest; by the most simple-minded, as by the most learned and advanced of the race. Let the feeling of this spiritual nature, and of this spiritual and immortal brotherhood, be associated in every mind with all the employments and conditions of an advancing civilization, and what will be the necessary result? An equalization of property? No. But there would be, what is infinitely better, *an equalization of happiness*, such as the world has never seen. Let this feeling prevail, and there will be a security of life, of liberty, and of property, which no constitutions or laws without it can effect. This is the only equalization of condition at which Christianity aims; and would you not by every means advance it?"

"Most joyfully," said my friend; "and I hope that I shall endeavor, more faithfully than I ever yet have endeavored, to advance it. In a review of this day, I feel that, but for my own fault, it will be a very profitable one. I could say of more than one whom I have visited with you to-day, 'Let my soul be with her soul for ever!' But I thank you above all for the knowledge you have given me of Catharine W——. Pray write the narrative you have given me of her, and let others have the advantage of her admirable example."

I answered, "I will." And now, reader, I have accomplished my promise. I have even

done more. I have given you a narrative of a day. If I have taken from you an hour which you would otherwise have passed more profitably, I am sorry for it. If I have quickened in you one impulse of generous and Christian feeling,—above all, if I have thrown one ray of light upon any Christian principle, and in the smallest degree have strengthened in your mind one desire and purpose of a better discharge of Christian duty, I shall be glad and grateful.

END







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